

# *Indian Family Businesses in Natal, 1870–1950*

*The arrival of ‘passenger Indians’ in Natal from the 1870s onwards heralded a new era in colonial history. They arrived to serve the economic needs of the indentured labourers and laid the foundations of the Indian commercial class in the colony. However, their growth and prosperity in commercial enterprise produced anti-Indian sentiments that culminated in a series of laws that aimed at restricting their economic, political and residential rights in South Africa. This paper traces their early arrival and settlement and examines some of the challenges Indian family businesses encountered during the period 1870-1950.*

## **Passenger or Free Indians**

The arrival and settlement of indentured Indians in Natal inevitably paved way for ‘free’ or ‘passenger’ Indians to Natal, who largely came to serve the economic needs of the Indian labourers. They came as free Indians, under normal immigration laws and were subjects of the British Empire. They paid their own passage and were therefore described by the colonists as ‘passenger Indians’. Unlike their indentured compatriots they were not bound by any contractual labour conditions and were initially free to settle and trade in the colony. Like indentured Indians, they were motivated by both ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors and the prospect of a better life prompted their migration to the colony.

The free or passenger Indians who immigrated to Natal in the mid-1870s were in the main Gujarati-speaking Hindus and Muslims from the west coast of India. This group of Indians, to a very large extent, pioneered Indian trading activity in Natal. They migrated mainly from the province of Kathiawad, and its surrounding coastal districts and villages, for example, Surat, Kutch, Porbander, Jamnagar, Rander and Kholvad.<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati-speaking Muslims in Natal comprised two groups, mainly the Memons and Khojas. Both groups were converts from Hinduism and were disciples of Abdullah, an Arab missionary. In India the Memons were highly concentrated around Bombay, and its surrounding districts of Kholvad and Kathor. A few also migrated from Kathiawar, particularly from the districts of Kolaba and Ranavav.<sup>2</sup> Memons were not only active in Natal but were economically active in Mauritius, East Africa and the Far East. Prominent Memon traders in Natal were Abbobaker Amod, Abdoola Hajee Adam Jhaveri and Moosa Hajee Cassim.<sup>3</sup> In Natal Muslim migrants who originated from Surat were referred to as ‘Surti Bohras’. Prominent amongst them were the Lockhat Brothers, the Paruks and the Motalas. They established business ventures not only in KwaZulu-Natal but nationally and internationally.

The Gujarati Hindus amongst the passenger Indians migrated to Natal at the turn of the century. Like their Muslim counterparts they shared a common language and place of origin but differed in religion. Migrants who came from the District of Surat and its nearby villages such as Bardoli, Navasari and Broach were often referred to as ‘Surtees’. They consisted of different caste groups and in many cases this determined the type of occupation they engaged in. For example the Sonis (goldsmiths) migrated from Porander, Rajkot and Jamnagar. The Dhobis (laundrymen), and the Mochis (shoemakers) originated from Kholvad, Kathor and Navasari. Many after immigrating to Natal continued in their respective occupations. For example, Makan Naran, a dhobi (laundryman), arrived in Natal at the end of the nineteenth century from Surat. Because of the uneasy socio-economic conditions in India, he migrated to Natal. On arrival he engaged in the laundry business, collecting and carrying bundles of laundry to ‘finish’ at streams and rivers on the outskirts of Durban. He later established his laundry business at 181 Gale Street.<sup>4</sup> Other Gujarati immigrants, such as Mohanlal Kanjee Lodhia and Mohanlal Valjee, who were goldsmiths in India, continued with their trade in Natal. For example, the latter emigrated in 1905 and immediately began hawking fruit and vegetables. Later he rented a two-bedroomed house in Umgeni Road and used this as a workshop for his jewellery business. Another Gujarati-speaking Hindu, Bhana Parsotam, arrived in 1888 from Surat. He settled in Durban and established an eating-house for African labourers and adjacent to this he built a clothing store. He is also credited with establishing the first Indian confectionery store, which sold a variety of Indian delicacies. He was extremely successful and by 1913 was a regular advertiser in *The Colonial Indian News* and the *Indian Opinion*, two popular Indian newspapers serving the Indian community in South Africa.<sup>5</sup>

### **Settlement of Indian Traders**

Indian traders were often also referred to ‘Arab traders’, largely because the Muslims amongst them were in the majority and they often dressed in their traditional attire, which though not the same, nevertheless suggested flowing Arab robes. The trading community were mainly concentrated in Natal due to the large presence of indentured Indian labourers and the improved transport and communication systems. Indian traders established trading stores along the coast and the interior. They settled in the magisterial districts of Inanda, Umlazi and Alexandra, and also moved towards the interior and settled in Umkomanzi, Umgeni and Umvoti. Others moved even further inland to Ladysmith and the coal mining districts of Dundee, Newcastle and Ladysmith. Most of them were petty traders, concentrating mainly on selling Indian groceries and African goods. Durban and Pietermaritzburg also provided strong and lucrative markets for Indian traders who settled there. Durban’s development and importance as a centre of trade is described by Swanson as follows:

White Natal at the turn of this [20th] century was a close-knit commercial and agricultural society of some 90 000 people whose major development had come with the rise of commerce through the great harbour at Durban; serving the mineral boom at Kimberley and the Witwatersrand. Urban growth was dramatic from the 1870s onwards. Durban’s population and trade doubled each decade in contrast to half that rate for Natal as a whole. By the 1890s the port city alone contained nearly a third of the colony’s white inhabitants and had acquired the material and institutional attributes of urban modernity.<sup>6</sup>

In Durban the presence of indentured and ex-indentured Indians led to many Indian traders opening shops in the city centre. Several Indian 'locations' could be found at the west end of West Street, the northern part of Field Street and the boundary of the Western Vlei.<sup>7</sup> The business directory of the *Natal Almanac and Yearly Register* and the voters' roll for the Borough of Durban between 1885 and 1908 provide valuable information on the occupation and residential addresses of Indian traders. The voters' list shows that the early traders initially settled and traded in West Street but later moved to Grey and Field streets and Commercial Road. This was largely due to the fact that the Durban municipality wanted to restrict Indian trading to a specific area, to eliminate competition with white traders. Nevertheless, the lists consist of both traders of passenger origin as well as ex-indentured Indians who engaged in trade. The first 'Arab' trader to establish a shop in West Street was Aboobaker Amod. Between 1885 and 1886 the voters' list for the Borough of Durban listed 33 traders, 12 of whom were 'Arabs', eight of them trading in West Street. Between 1887 and 1888 there were 48 traders, 19 'Arabs' and 14 residing in West Street. In 1894, 86 traders were listed, of whom 74 were 'Arabs' and 39 of whom traded in West Street. Indian traders also rented and owned other valuable property in West Street which indicated that they were plying a fairly prosperous trade. Earlier, for example between 1885 and 1886, only one Indian trader owned property in West Street, namely Aboobaker Amod. Others soon followed. Moosa Hajee Cassim, a wealthy merchant and shipowner, rented premises in West Street between 1885 and 1891. However, by 1905 he became the sole owner of his premises at 456 West Street.<sup>8</sup> Thus by the beginning of the twentieth century Indian traders or 'Arab' stores had become a regular feature of Durban's economic landscape. A visitor described the shops along the north side of West Street in 1902–1903:

They are mostly clothing shops, or fruiterers kept by Indians all neat and clean.... They have also spread east of Grey Street and there is one shop where Indian curios are sold, on the south side of the street. The other shops are kept by white people with 'ladies' and 'gentlemen' to serve.....One meets only respectable Indians in the streets, generally Bombay men, who are evidently traders, as distinct from the coolies who mostly come from Madras, but a few from Calcutta.<sup>9</sup>

### **Internal Organisation and Pattern of Trade**

Indian trade in Natal can be characterised into three distinct categories: the established merchants, petty traders and hawkers. Collectively they formed the Indian commercial class. As merchants, petty traders and hawkers, their skills were reflected in their ability to diversify, integrate and specialise in their respective trades. This was clearly reflected in the trading patterns of the more established merchants who constantly embarked on new economic ventures. Apart from retailing and wholesaling, many took to real estate, shipping, importing and manufacturing. In addition, the structural organisation and patterns of trade are a clear reflection of the nature of Indian businesses: strong kinship ties and frugal mode of living.<sup>10</sup>

The pioneer traders were often representatives of major international companies who wanted to expand their business enterprises to Natal. Others (a small minority) who had sufficient capital opened up shops immediately or entered into partnerships with a relative or friend from the same village and often belonging to the same religion. A study of 28 Indian business partnerships formed between 1884-1900, shows that 17

belonged to Indians of ‘passenger’ origin, namely Gujarati-speaking Muslims. In some instances partnerships were formed temporarily, often one partner later leaving the firm to establish a business of his own. Petty traders formed the core of the Indian commercial class in Natal. They generally arrived in the Colony when they were between the ages of 17 and 25, and served apprenticeships with an established firm for a few years, until they had saved enough capital to set up their own shops. Well-established traders who offered apprenticeships to prospective traders were Aboobaker Amod, Amod Bayat and Parsi Rustomjee. Caste and kinship ties played an important role in the employment and early organisation of Indian businesses. Top priority was always given to family members and friends who shared the same caste affiliation and village origin. The more established merchants were able to recruit skilled artisans under a contract system. In most cases contracts offered the individual medical, travelling and boarding benefits. The wages paid to employees often ranged from 30 shillings to £15 a month.

White traders often complained about Indian business practices. For example, George L. Russell, a draper in Ladysmith, stated in 1905 that his business suffered due to strong Arab competition. He claimed that Arabs ‘imported’ assistants from India and paid them between £3 and £4 a month. He added that ‘juniors’ from India were paid 30 shillings per month while white traders were paying their assistants between £14 to £20 a month.<sup>11</sup> Indian merchants were also criticised for the ‘primitive method of bookkeeping’ of their business transactions. Books were drawn in either Gujarati and Urdu, the former predominating. The petty storekeeper was in the habit of keeping a cash book and a daily book to record transactions, while the larger merchants kept an invoice and a stock book. Books were drawn once a week or once a fortnight. The owner of the store usually dictated to the accountant what entries to make, especially if the latter was a non-Indian and who was not fluent in the Gujarati language. Colonial traders often accused Indian traders of resorting to illegal trading methods because of their non-compliance with proper bookkeeping methods. Subsequently, the Natal Government passed the General Dealers’ Licensing Act, which made it compulsory for all traders to keep their accounts in the English language. This placed severe restrictions on the petty Indian traders, who were not fluent in English and could not always hire a competent bookkeeper who was. Consequently, a considerable number of them were refused trade licences because of their inability to keep books in the approved way.<sup>12</sup>

While the petty traders formed the core of the Indian commercial class, the more established merchants were a tiny minority, often described as an élite group. They engaged not only in retailing and wholesaling of Indian and African goods but also diversified their trade by investing in real estate, shipping and by importing, as stated above. Those who headed the list of major importers were Dada Abdoolla and Co., Jalbhoy Sorabjee Bros, Moosa Hajee Cassim, Dada Osman and Aboobaker Amod. These merchants were representatives of major international companies which regularly supplied them with Indian groceries. For example, Ajum Goolam Hoosen and Co., a firm based in Mauritius, exported dholl, ghee, dates and haberdashery to their agent Aboobaker Amod fairly regularly after 1880. Moosa Hajee Cassim, another merchant, made regular trips abroad sourcing Indian goods.<sup>13</sup>

Importing Indian goods was essential, as many of these items could not be manufactured in Natal. Besides, these merchants knew precisely the preferences and customs of

the Indian people and used this knowledge effectively in their trading ventures in Natal. A witness stated at the Wragg Commission in 1885-87:

Their friends and partners in India can watch the market and purchase at the moment of greatest profit and advantage, they know the ways and habits of Indian immigrants and choose their stock by the aid of such knowledge....<sup>14</sup>

The chief articles imported were dhol, ghee, rice, spices and other Indian condiments referred to as 'coolie stores' in the list of general imports.<sup>15</sup> Besides being major importers of goods, Indian merchants also took the role of money-lenders or 'local bankers'. In 1908 an advertisement appeared in the *Indian Opinion* to the effect that loans were available against bonds, title deeds and other available securities. In East Africa, Indian merchants played a similar role by assisting European explorers in their expeditions, on occasion contracting to forward additional supplies of provisions and trade goods into the interior.<sup>16</sup> Indian merchants also advanced money to family members and friends. Most often these loans were made to assist relatives or friends to set up their businesses. They were often extended on the basis of trust, with no legally binding documents. Failure to repay the debt often meant exclusion from the trade and credit network.

The vast majority of Indian traders were general dealers, but a few specialised in certain types of trade. For example, the Gujarati-speaking Muslims—in particular those who originated from Bombay and Surat—specialised in Indian fabrics and clothing. Amongst them were Hoodamals, E. Aboobaker & Bros and M.C. Camroodeen & Co. For example, Hoodamal was a Mooltani silk merchant trading at 476 West Street. He stocked a large variety of Indian curios and fancy goods such as cashmere shawls, Chinese and Maltese silks, amongst other items. Aboobaker and Camroodeen dealt chiefly in the imported ladies' and children's clothing, namely hats, boots and underskirts. Others specialised in tobacco. For example, S.P. Mahomed & Co., Ebrahim Camroodeen and M.Sohner Peerum were tobacconists. They sold a variety of cigars, cheroots and perfumes. A few, such as N.M.A Karrim, O.N Mahomed & Co., and Suliman Essop, specialised in hardware and timber.<sup>17</sup>

Indian merchants, in particular the more established traders, also took to commercial advertising to promote and market their wares. As early as 1883, established merchants such as Dada Abdoolah & Co; Parsee Rustomjee and Aboobaker Amod, made their appearances in the *Natal Almanac and Yearly Register*. Others followed in 1890: Hajee Mahomed, Hajee Dada, Ismail Mamojee & Co. The circulation of local Indian newspapers at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as *Indian Opinion*, *Al Islam*, *The Colonial Indian News* and the *African Chronicle*, provided Indian merchants with an opportunity to advertise. Readership was mainly confined to local Indians as many of these newspapers appeared in the vernacular languages. Advertising in the early years was generally conservative, with adverts appearing in Gujarati and English, and at times Urdu. They simply stated the name and address of the company, and the type of goods for sale. Advertising space bought by petty traders was often no larger than the size of a match-box, but more established merchants placed larger, bolder adverts, and at times also printed the logo of their company as well as a picture of their premises.<sup>18</sup>

### **Competition and Conflict 1890–1914**

The monopolisation of both the retail and African trade by Indian traders in the 1880s unleashed a wave of anti-Indian sentiment in Natal. It culminated in the passing of racial

legislation which aimed at curtailing the economic and political freedom of Indians in the province. This was possible once Natal had attained Responsible Government in 1893. (This was a stage of colonial development where the British Government granted a very large measure of self-government to the white inhabitants of the colony.) Several of the leading and pioneer Indian merchants viewed the constitutional change in Natal with great fear and anxiety. They were convinced that the Colony's government, now under the almost unfettered control of the white colonists, would place their trading rights and vested interests in jeopardy. In 1891 the Durban Indian Committee under the chairmanship of Hajee Dada was formed. The aim of the committee was to protect the economic interests of the Indian merchants. The committee petitioned the Colonial Office and officials in India, arguing that responsible government in Natal 'would do us incalculable harm'.<sup>19</sup> During the first parliamentary session under responsible government, legislation was passed that was to affect Indian commercial interests. In 1894, Act 22, Powers of the Municipal Corporations Bill was introduced to empower town councils to regulate sanitary conditions in Natal's boroughs. Indian shops and residences came under severe scrutiny for being 'unwholesome' and 'unsanitary'. During a debate on the bill held 3 May 1894 Sir John Robinson, Premier of Natal stated:

It is notorious that the only parts of Durban that can be considered as being in an unwholesome or unsanitary condition are those parts which are more particularly occupied by Asiatic residents.<sup>20</sup>

However, in many ways Act 22 was used as a means of refusing trade licences to Indians on alleged sanitary grounds. This practice was later reinforced with the introduction of Act 18, the General Dealers' Licences Amendment Law of 1897. This stipulated that local bodies such as the town councils or town boards would appoint an officer to issue licences to wholesale and retail dealers in the boroughs and townships. The licensing officer was bound to refuse to grant or renew a licence if the premises concerned did not comply with sanitary regulations and if the applicant was unable to fulfil the condition of the Insolvency Law no. 47 of 1887, which required account books to be kept in English. In addition, there was no right of appeal to any court of justice, if the licence was refused. The denial of the right of appeal was considered by Indian traders as an affront to their rights as British citizens. Even Natal's prime minister Harry Escombe, one of the chief architects of this Act, found it difficult to justify this aspect of the legislation:

It would not be possible to pass this Bill without appearing to take away a part of the liberty of the subject, because the subject now had a right to a licence as a matter of course, and if this Bill were passed into Law, the subject would no longer have the right. He would only have that right if the licensing authority thought fit to grant it. This Bill interferes with the course of Law, because the Bill would be defeated in its objects if the Courts had jurisdiction.<sup>21</sup>

L.E. Neame, writing on the Act in 1907 in *Asiatic Danger in the Colonies* states:

Outwardly it carefully avoids class legislation, for in theory it applies equally to Europeans and Asiatics. But in practice it operates against the Indian storekeepers. No white man is refused a licence....in Durban; the Act had been admittedly utilised in order to prevent Indian merchants opening shops in the principal streets. The licensing officer is the servant body [*sic*] of white storekeepers. He knows their

views and whatever his personal opinion may be, he can hardly be expected to sacrifice his appointment by opposing those who employ him. As a protective measure to the white trader, the Act is valuable. From the standpoint of expediency the system may find supporters; in reality it is simply class legislation.<sup>22</sup>

The licensing law placed severe restrictions on Indian trade. Loss of a licence made it very difficult for a storekeeper to sell his business because there was no guarantee that the purchaser would be successful in acquiring a licence. Sometimes retail licences were granted for a limited period only in order to enable the applicant to sell off his goods. The plight of the Indian traders in Natal became so acute that the Indian government threatened to put a stop to the provision of indentured labour. Despite the threat Natal premier Albert Hime stated in 1903 that ‘Arab traders’ posed a mortal danger to Natal which ‘can never be a matter of indifference to a European population enjoying rights of Responsible Government.’<sup>23</sup> In the same year, the Natal government passed the Immigration Restriction Bill which was aimed at the Indian trading class.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s there was an influx of passenger Indians into the Colony which to some extent alarmed the white colonists. In the course of six months from July 1896 to January 1897, 1 964 passenger Indians arrived. Between July 1894 and December 1895 4 432 indentured Indians arrived. Colonial agitation against these developments reached a climax with the anti-Indian demonstration of December 1896-January 1897 at the Durban dock area known as the Point. Gandhi was returning



*Anti-Indian demonstration at the docks, Durban 1896. Many white colonists were concerned about continued Indian immigration and a demonstration was organised in order to stop further immigrants landing. Tempers flared and Harry Escombe, then a member of the cabinet who became prime minister the following year, mounted a pile of wood to address the crowd. Although the demonstrators eventually dispersed peacefully, M.K. Gandhi was subsequently assaulted as he made his way into town.*

to Natal after a controversial trip to India. While in India, he had published a pamphlet titled *The Grievances of British Indians in South Africa: An Appeal to the Indian Public*. Gandhi detailed the discriminatory policies of the Natal Government and the hardships of British Indians residing in the colony. When he attempted to disembark at the Point, together with other Indian passengers, he was met with resistance from colonists. The Point demonstration highlighted the growing hostility between the colonists and the free Indian population.<sup>24</sup> Thus the Immigration Restriction Bill was an attempt to allay the colonists' concern about the 'Asiatic invasion'. The Bill required immigrants to have £25 and knowledge of a European language in its written form. The Bill to some extent hindered the development and expansion of Indian commerce because the language test made it difficult for Indian merchants to recruit assistants from India, as the latter were fluent only in Gujarati and had no knowledge of English. In addition the trading class made regular trips to India to connect with family and friends, but on their return they were forced to apply for domicile certificates.<sup>25</sup>

The position of the Indian trader deteriorated after 1905. In the post Anglo-Boer War period an economic recession hit Natal which coincided with an anti-Indian outburst. The battle cry was 'Down with the Indian trader'. Public meetings were held throughout the colony calling for the more rigid application of the Licensing Act. In Pietermaritzburg, the Chamber of Commerce called upon the licensing officer to refuse all new licences and transfers. The most vociferous opponents of Indian trade were the numerous petty white traders who came into direct competition and were united in their agitation. Yet for a large section of the population, in particular indentured Indians and African labourers, the Indian trader with his low prices and variety of goods, in times of economic recession provided relief. In 1908 the Natal government introduced legislation aimed at fixing trade licences for 10 years, after which no licences would be granted. This was to affect primarily Indian traders. Fortunately for the Indian community the legislation was not approved by the British Colonial Office.<sup>26</sup>

In 1910 the colonies of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal, and the former Boer republics the Orange Free State and the Transvaal entered into a political Union, and fresh restrictions on Indian immigration and trade were to continue in the post-Union period. In 1913 the Union government passed the third Immigration Bill, aimed at restricting the Indian trading class. An immigrant could be excluded if he could not read and write in a European language. Domicile rights were lost after three years, only immigrants having domicile had the right of appeal to the Courts.

The Indian trading community objected to the bill. Many recruited friends and relatives to work as clerks, managers and supervisors in their shops, and the majority of their assistants were not fluent in English. The Indian community protested by engaging in a massive passive resistance strike, which received widespread publicity in both India and London.

The strike culminated in the passing of the Indian Relief Act in 1914. While this provided temporary relief, in that one wife and minor children of domiciled Indians were given residential status, the language test was still enforced.<sup>27</sup> However, by 1914 the outbreak of the First World War did much to push the 'Indian question' aside. Nevertheless, anti-Indian sentiment was still strong and the position of Indian traders deteriorated further.

**1914–1950**

During the First World War the Indian trading community of Natal assisted eagerly in the war effort. Both the established merchants and the petty traders contributed generously to war funds and made regular donations of food and clothing. The war inevitably created economic boom conditions with the influx of foreign troops and the rise in food prices. However, it also created a climate for unscrupulous Indian traders to monopolise basic food items, and rice in particular. They often became targets of petty white traders whose resentment unleashed another wave of anti-Indian feeling in the post-war period.

This led to the appointment of the Asiatic Enquiry Commission of 1921, the findings and recommendations of which are important in that they dispelled the myth of the 'Asiatic menace'. It argued that low standards were a matter of class and not race, and that Indian traders though they did undersell white traders benefited the consumer. However, despite these comments and findings, the Commission recommended voluntary segregation.

The Nationalist and Labour parties' 'Pact' government which came to power in 1924 sought to act on that recommendation. It viewed the Indian community as 'aliens' and a threat to white economic interests, and sought to restrict the entry of Indians into South Africa and to impose further trading and residential restrictions on domiciled and South African born Indians. It did this by introducing the Class Areas and Areas Reservation and Immigration and Restriction (Further Provision) Bills of 1924 and 1925 respectively. If enacted they would have legislated compulsory segregation of the races.<sup>28</sup>

Because in the post-Union period many established Indian traders had diversified their business activities to include shipping, real estate and manufacturing, such legislation would have been critical to Indian vested interests as it would have allowed Indians to lease and purchase immovable property only in demarcated areas. In addition, Indian traders were constantly at loggerheads with licensing officers who sought to restrict the issuing of new retail licences. Several crucial cases brought before the Natal Supreme Court bear testimony to this fact. However, the intervention of the Indian Government in 1927 prevented the bills from being enacted, much to the relief of the Indian community.<sup>29</sup>

The issue of compulsory segregation, however, resurfaced in the 1930s and 1940s. This was a response to the 'penetration' of Indians into predominantly white areas that was supposedly taking place throughout Natal. When a few wealthy Indian merchants acquired or occupied property in such areas, whites denounced this and raised concerns over 'Indian penetration'.

In response, the government appointed the Broome Commission (under Mr Justice F.N. Broome). Its finding was that acquisition of property was based not on race but economic need. The more established Indian merchants were seeking alternative forms of investment, and purchase of immovable property was an important one. It affected only a small group of Indians as the vast majority of the Indian commercial class were petty traders and were not in a position to invest in property.

A temporary solution was achieved in 1944, after a negotiated agreement whereby the more established Indian merchants showed a pragmatic willingness to accept some form of voluntary segregation, as long as their vested interests were not affected.<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

The arrival of the passenger Indians to Natal from the 1870s onwards laid the foundations of the Indian commercial class. They played an important role in developing and expanding Natal's commercial network. The pioneer merchants not only laid the foundation of Indian commercial expansion and diversification, but also challenged the colonial economic system based on racial prejudice. The post-Union period was challenging, as the war had created new economic and social conditions. In their endeavours to survive, many succeeded while others sought alternative employment. Their position did not improve after 1948, as the Nationalist government adopted the apartheid policy, which further entrenched separation of the races. The Group Areas Act of 1950 was to create innumerable problems for Indian family businesses in the years that followed.

Events in South Africa since 1950, and their effect on Indian South Africans in general and on Indian businesspeople in particular, form another important topic, but one which is beyond the scope of the present article.

KALPANA HIRALAL

## NOTES

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- <sup>26</sup> PAR, CSO, 'Petition by Natal Indians Regarding their Position Under Closer Union'; vol. 1878 no. 5595/1909; *Indian Opinion*, 9 November 1907; K.Hiralal, 'Indian Family Businesses in the Natal Economy 1890–1950' (PhD, University of Natal, 2000), pp.207–11. Unpublished thesis.
- <sup>27</sup> *Indian Opinion* 8 July 1914; M. Swan, *Gandhi—The South African experience*, p.210; Richard D.Keiser, 'The South African Indians' Challenge to the Union and Imperial Governments, 1910–1919', *South African Historical Journal*, 13, 1981, p.83.
- <sup>28</sup> Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill, 3 March 1926, pp.16–17; *Hindi*, 4 September 1925, 11 September 1925, 16 October 1925.
- <sup>29</sup> K. Hiralal, 'Indian Family Businesses in the Natal Economy', pp.204–10; Mesthrie, 'From Sastri to Deshmukh', p.312; *Indian Views*, 18 February, 1938.
- <sup>30</sup> Report of the Indian Penetration Commission, 1941, pp.63–4; *Indian Views*, 17 January 1941; K. Hiralal, 'Indian Family Businesses in the Natal Economy' p.211.