"Indo-Caribbeans in USA - Achievements, Opportunities & Challenges"

A presentation by Ashook Ramsaran

The Rise of Transnational Populism: A Multidisciplinary Approach
9th Annual CLACS Multidisciplinary Symposium on Immigration
St. John's University, Jamaica, New York
Thursday, May 3rd, 2018

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

The Rise of Transnational Populism: A Multidisciplinary Approach

9th Annual CLACS Multidisciplinary Conference on Immigration

May 2nd, 2018
President's Room, Carnesecca Arena
& May 3rd, 2018
DAC 128
St. John's University Queens Campus
8:30am-6:30pm

St. John's University participants will include distinguished scholars from various disciplines, diplomats from diverse parts of the world, and community leaders. ***Panels will present on topics to include: social justice and human rights, education and healthcare issues, government policies, immigrant stories and identities in literature and art.***

Dr. Carlos Eire

Keynote Speaker

Professor of History and Religious Studies at Yale University
Author of: *Waiting for Snow in Havana* and *Learning to Die in Miami: Confessions of a Refugee Boy*

For additional information and pre-registration:
Please contact CLACS at clacs@stjohns.edu or (718) 990-5829

This event is sponsored by St. John's University Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) and by the Office of the Provost; the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Lecture Series; Office of Student Affairs; Office of Global Studies; Department of Languages and Literatures; and the Graduate School of Health Sciences at Touro College

"Indo-Caribbeans in USA - Achievements, Opportunities & Challenges"

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Good afternoon.

I want to thank Dr Alina Camacho-Gingerich of St. John's University's Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies (CLACS) for this opportunity to make this presentation on

"Indo-Caribbeans in USA - Achievements, Opportunities & Challenges"

It gives me an opportunity to present some vital information and statistics which can be useful in understanding the migration of **Indo-Caribbeans to USA**, their assimilation, achievements, challenges and opportunities. I also look forward to answering any questions at the end of this presentation – or via email to me afterwards.

Title of Presentation

This presentation will provide a brief history of **Indo-Caribbeans** migration to America – **Indo-Caribbeans** being defined as descendants of people from India who were brought to the Caribbean region as Indentured laborers by the British between 1838 – 1920 to fill the labor force vacated by the abolition of slavery in 1834.

Refer to the chart below and the list of former British, French, Dutch and Danish colonies which were destination colonies for Indian indentured laborers.

It will also provide the migration trend which is increasing at a rapid rate, the achievements and accomplishments in various segments of US society, the many opportunities available and pursued, as well as the challenges and the many opportunities such challenges present to **Indo-Caribbeans** in America. It is important to make the distinction between Native Americans (sometimes referred to as Indians) and those from the sub-continent as well as persons of Indian origin.

I will use and refer to several references from several invaluable sources which would be named in the footnotes when this presentation is printed or published.

- **Migration to USA**

Indo-Caribbeans started arriving in USA earlier in the early 1960's as laborers in the sugar cane fields in Florida and Louisiana. These were few and that trend lasted only for a short while.

Starting in the 1960's, **Indo-Caribbeans** started arriving in New York area for political and economic reasons, using academic institutions and family extensions for visas to the USA. There are **Indo-Caribbeans** mostly from Guyana and Trinidad while some from Grenada, Suriname, Belize, St Lucia and the French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The total number is estimated to be over **200,000** primarily in New York City, lesser numbers in Schenectady, Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut – with a substantial population in Orlando and South Florida. There are scattered pockets in other states such as Georgia, Virginia, DC, California, etc.

Besides those **Indo-Caribbeans** born in USA, the migration trend shows persons from Guyana among the largest groups of immigrants to NYC and especially Queens.

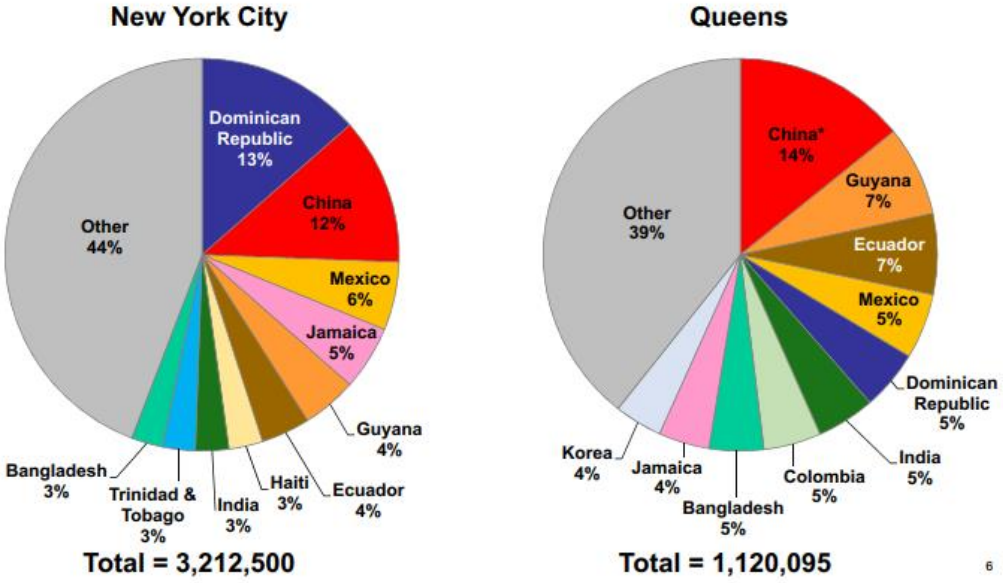
INDIAN INDENTURED MIGRATION ARRIVAL HISTORY

Country	Date of First Arrival & Ship Names	Number of Indenture Arrivals
Mauritius	November 2, 1834 – *Atlas*	451,796
Guyana (formerly British Guiana)	May 5, 1838 – *Whitby*	238,909
Trinidad & Tobago	May 31, 1845 – *Fatal Razak*	143,939
Guadeloupe	December 24, 1854	42,326
Jamaica	May 7, 1845 – *Maidstone*	36,412
Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana)	June 5, 1873 – *Lalla Rookh*	34,000
Martinique	May 6, 1853 – *Aurelie*	25,509
French Guiana(South America)	1854	19,276
St. Lucia	May 6, 1859 – *Palmyra*	4,354
Grenada	January 27, 1857 – *Maidstone*	3,200
St. Vincent	June 1, 1861 – *Travancore*	2,472
Belize (formerly British Honduras) located in Central America	1858 – Sepoy Indians 1882	1,000 from 1857 revolt 3,000 from Jamaica
St. Kitts	June 3, 1861 – *Dartmouth*	361
Nevis	1874	315
St. Croix	1863	321
Reunion Island	April 13, 1828 – *Yangon*	120 000
Seychelles	1898	6,315
South Africa	November 16, 1860 – *Truro*	150,000
Fiji	May 15, 1879 – *Leonidas*	60,965
East Africa – Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Zanzibar, Uganda, Malawi	On-going research – indenture & contract labour for railroads and sugar plantations	On-going research

Note: The information above is compiled from various sources and its accuracy is based on information reviewed. Credit to the many historians, researchers and authors whose information have been used to compile the listing above.

Compiled from various sources by Ashook Ramsaran (President, Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)

Top Countries of Birth for the Foreign-born
New York City and Queens, 2015



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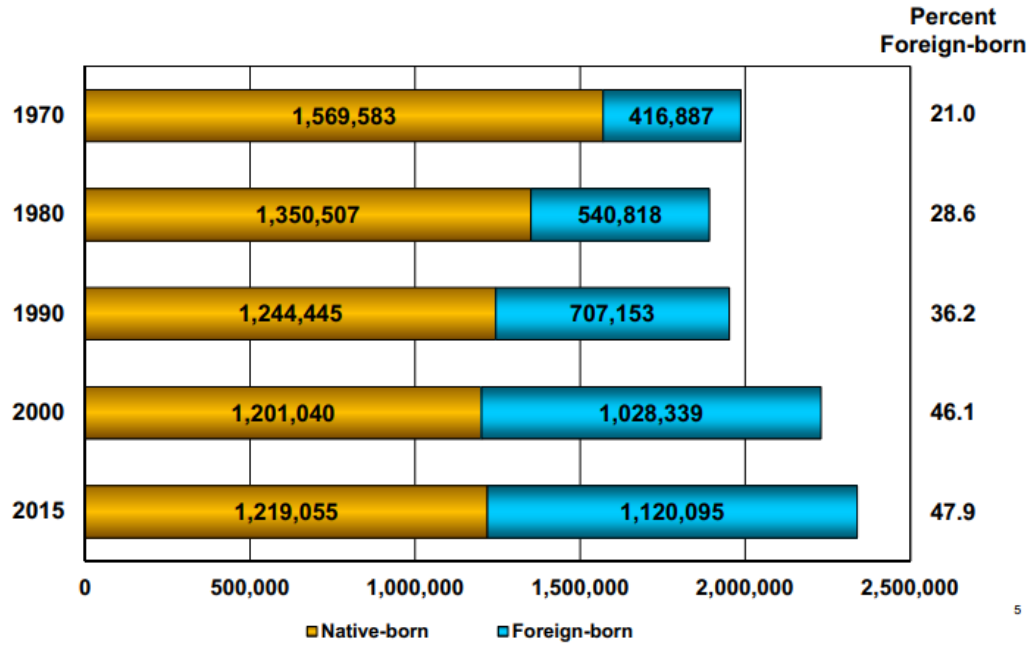
NYC PLANNING

* Includes the mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey-Summary File
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

Total Population by Nativity
Queens, 1970 to 2015



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NYC PLANNING

Sources: U.S. Census of Population, 1970 to 2000; 2015 American Community Survey
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

"Indo-Caribbeans in USA - Achievements, Opportunities & Challenges"

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- **Achievements**

Considering their recent arrival in the USA, **Indo-Caribbeans** in USA have made significant progress in every segment of the population which include the following – not necessarily in order or level. It is a tribute to hard work, perseverance and determination.

  - Home ownership – primary source of savings
  - Academic achievements and positions
    - Professors, lecturers,
    - High achievers
  - Social and cultural –
    - Senior centers in Queens
    - Mandirs, mosques, churches in all boroughs
    - Holi parades, Diwali celebrations
    - Religious events at Queens City Hall & NYC Borough Hall
  - Health Care
    - Home health care; doctors, nursing, technicians, support staff
  - Professionals
    - Doctors; Dentists; Attorneys (incl bar association); CPAs, Mortgage Businesses, Real Estate Agencies, etc.
  - Businesses:
    - Real Estate, Insurance, Medical/Dental, Import/Export, Wholesale/Retail shops, Travel (incl charter airline), Restaurants, Lounges, …
  - Entertainment & Media
    - American Idol top contestant;
    - Journalists at News 1, WPIX, Queens Tribune;
    - Own newspapers: West Indian, Guyana Times, Kaiteur News
    - Television programs; Radio programs
  - Political
    - District leaders, prominent staff at various city agencies, political elected officials.
    - Advocacy for "home" politics
  - Sports
    - Cricket in several boroughs
    - Participation in all sports – academic and leagues
  - Recognition
    - Celebration of independence days of various Caribbean countries
    - Resolutions in NYS – Albany & NYC City Hall
    - Co-Naming a street in Queens in honor of community advocate

- **Opportunities**

  - Indo-Caribbean in America should be more actively engaged in US society by collaborating and support of public programs and other groups on immigration issues, education, crime, race issues, etc.
  - Establishment of a national "US Indo-Caribbean Think Tank" comprising high caliber individual who can contribute objectively to a very progressive agenda for "Strengthening the role of Indo-Caribbean America and Indo-Caribbean-US Relations".
  - Establish an agenda driven, professional national lobby non-political group for the interests of Indo-Caribbean in USA and engage in the political process of electing Indo-Caribbean in America to office.

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- **Challenges**
  - Voter registration &Voting
  - Census count & Census category
  - Political empowerment
  - Consensus building among Indo-Caribbeans in USA
  - Collaboration with other ethnic groups – inter-ethnic relations
  - Motivation for full participation in all segments of society
- **Issues of Interest & Concern**
  - Immigration
    - ICE & deportations
    - Family sponsorships delays
  - Domestic violence
    - Excessive drinking
    - Assaults and domestic abuse
  - Youth & Education
    - Drop out rates
    - Crime rates
  - Health & Wellness
    - Traditional fat & sugar content foods
    - High blood pressure
    - Cardiac problems
    - Diabetes
    - Early age medical problems
  - Health & Wellness
    - Traditional fat & sugar content foods
    - High blood pressure
    - Cardiac problems
- **Trends and the Future**

  Indo-Caribbeans in USA are uniquely poised to avail themselves of opportunities for individual and collective benefits. The future looks promising with committed persons and groups becoming more pro-active
  - Recent Mar 18 Women's Advocacy & Empowerment
  - May 7 NYC Comptroller roundtable discussion on community issues
  - Forum on Caribbeans in New York – Achievements, Challenges & Opportunities
  - Political engagement and empowerment
  - More visible role in US society, assimilation and adaptation

Thank you

Ashook K. Ramsaran was born in Guyana (formerly British Guiana), third generation of Indian indentured laborers who were brought to Guyana in 1853 and 1860 respectively. He emigrated to USA in 1968 and obtained BS & MS degrees (Electrical Engineering) at New York Polytechnic University. After prominent positions in US industry, he founded Ramex, an electronics manufacturing company based in New York, USA and resides in Queens, New York, USA with his family, namely wife Camille; sons Arnold and Gerald, and grandsons Jaden and Gavin. Ramsaran is founder/president of the Indian Diaspora Council International (**IDC**) and immediate past president of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO International). He is Vice President of Queens Civic Congress (New York), Chair of New York Presbyterian Hospital Queens Community Advisory Council, Board Member of St John's University Center for Caribbean and Latin American Studies, and Board Member of Fresh Meadows Homeowners Civic Association. He is the recipient of numerous local and international awards in recognition for his many years of outstanding community service and raising awareness of critical issues of interest and concern.
Contact: AshookRamsaran@gmail.com

(l-r) Ashook Ramsaran;Dr. Alina Camacho-Gingerich (SJU/CLACS); Hon. Kiva Clarke (Consul General, Trinidad & Tobago); Hon. Roseann St. Hill-Billouin (Dep. Consul General, Trinidad & Tobago)

(l-r) Vishnu Mahadeo, Ashook Ramsaran, Ashford Maharaj, PhD

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

The Rise of Transnational Populism:

A Multidisciplinary Approach

9th Annual CLACS Multidisciplinary Symposium on Immigration

Wednesday, May 2nd President's Room, Carnesecca Arena &
Thursday, May 3rd, 2018 D'Angelo Center 128

This event is sponsored by St. John's University Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) and by the Office of the Provost; the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Lecture Series;

Office of Student Affairs; Office of Global Studies; Department of Languages and Literatures; and the Graduate School of Health Sciences at Touro College.

8:45-9:10 am ***Registration and Breakfast***

9:15 am ***Welcoming Remarks***
Robert A. Mangione, Ed.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Remarks
Alina Camacho-Gingerich, Ph.D.
Chair Department of Languages and Literatures
Director Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS)

9:30 am ***Distinguished Diplomats' Roundtable Discussion (in alphabetical order by nation)***

Hon. Álvaro Rodrigo Pinilla Romero,
Consul General of Bolivia in New York

Hon. Maria Nieto
Consul General of Colombia in New York

Hon. Carlos Castillo
Consul General of Dominican Republic in New York

Hon. Diego Gomez Pickering
Consul General of Mexico in New York

Hon. María Teresa Merino de Hart
Consul General of Peru in New York

Hon. Kiva Clarke & Hon. Roseann St. Hill-Billouin
Consul General of Trinidad and Tobago in New York

11:30 am ***Trump's Populist Rhetoric and Its Impact on Immigrant Students in U.S. Schools***
Yvonne Pratt-Johnson, Ed.D., Moderator

"The Forgotten U.S. Citizens"
Audrey Figueroa Murphy, Ed.D.

"Trump v. The Rule of Law"
Della DeKay, Ed.D.

"Mentoring Latino College Students in the United States in Response to Populist Rhetoric and Policy"
Robert M. Mangione, Ed.D.

"Trump Rhetoric: What Has Changed for our Students?"
John Spiridakis, Ph.D.

12:30 pm Lunch

1:45 pm ***Keynote Speaker:***
Carlos Eire, Ph.D.
T. Lawrason Riggs Professor of History & Religious Studies
Yale University

2:45 pm ***Immigrant Identities in Art and Photography***

Presenters:
"Immigrant Portraits – Entering America – A presentation of historical & personal visual documents"
Belenna Lauto, M.A.

"Family and Personal Documentations"
Stefanie Perrotte, BFA in photography candidate

"Bordering the Imaginary In Context"
Abigail Dardashti, Ph.D. Candidate CUNY

3:45 pm ***Right-Wing Populism, Identity and the Fall-Out on the Migrant and the Indigenous***
Azzedine Layachi, Ph.D., and Flora Keshishian, Ph.D.
Panel Organizers

"Right -Wing Populism in the World: Nature, Impact on Migration, and What's to be Done About It"
Azzedine Layachi, Professor, Department of Government and Politics, SJC

"What Does It Mean to Be American? The Migrant Perspectives"
Desire Alain Elele, Senior, Department of Government and Politics

"Populism and Immigration in Germany: Trends and Significance"
Joseph Cenney, Graduate Student, Department of Government and Politics

"My Slice of the American Pie: Thoughts on the 'Great American Experiment"
Trevor J. Farland, Graduate Student, Department of Government and Politics

"National Identity: One Immigrant's Reflections"
Flora Keshishian, Ph.D.

Coffee Break

Interdisciplinary Research and Action to Advance Migrants' Health
Roberta Villalon, Ph.D., Panel Organizer & Presenter

4:45 pm **"Health and Migration: A Transnational, Interdisciplinary, Activist Research"**
Roberta Villalon, Ph.D.

5:00 pm **"Reflections on Interdisciplinary Collaborations: Junior Design, Migration, and Health"**
Aaris Sherin, M.F.A. & SJU Junior Design Student Presenters: Xiaoqing (Tiffany) Xu
Nikola Venglanova
Autumn Bean
Winona Peace
Abby Murray

Puerto Rico: An American Reaction to a Disaster Zone
Frank Le Veness, Ph.D., Panel Organizer & Presenter

"Causes and Costs of a Puerto Rican Catastrophe"
Francisco Perez SJU Student

"Social Justice Critique"
Kirin Taylor SJU Student

"A Revisionist Analysis of Puerto Rican Politics"
6:00 pm Matthew Gluckman SJU Student
"Nuestro Ideal: The Grassroots Movement Happening on the Island and How St. John's University is Helping"
Louis Saavedra
Academic Service Learning Coordinator

Closing Remarks
7:00 pm Louis H. Primavera, Ph.D.
Graduate School of Health Science, Touro College

Wine & Cheese Reception
7:15 pm

Thursday, May 3rd, 2018

8:45-9:10 am ***Registration and Breakfast***

9:15 am ***Welcoming Remarks***
Kathryn T. Hutchinson, Ph.D.
Vice President of Student Affairs

Remarks
Alina Camacho-Gingerich, Ph.D.
Chair Department of Languages and Literatures
Director Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS)

9:30 am ***Voices of Migrants in the Humanities***
Annalisa Sacca, Ph.D. & Carmen Klohe, Ph.D., Panel Organizers

"Waiting to Die in Miami: Memoirs of an Assimilation"
Carmen Klohe, Ph.D.

"A Tear and a Smile: A Migrant's Story and the Urgency of Intervention"
Annalisa Sacca, Ph.D.

"Migration and 'Enracinerrance' in the Work of Jean-Claude Charles"
Steve Puig, Ph.D.

"Populism in the Protection of the Environment and Engendered Species: Literature of Discontent"
Habibeh Rahim, Ph.D.

11:00 am ***Serving Increasing Minority Adult Populations in Healthcare Contexts***
Co-Chairs Rafael Javier, Ph.D. & Jose G. Centeno, Ph.D.

"The Case of Post-Stroke Rehabilitation of Communication Impairments"
Jose G. Centeno, Ph.D., CCC-SLP.
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, St. John's University

"Mental Health Challenges in the Caribbean Community (Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica etc)"
Sharla Madho- Khargi, PhD.
Adjunct City University of NY
Director of Community Based Rehabilitation
Indian Diaspora Council

"Nouveau Age of Deportation Anxiety: Fear Stokes the Hearts of Immigrants and Children"
Roy Aranda, Psy.D., J.D.
Clinical and Forensic Psychologist
Private practice, Long Island & Queens
President, Association of Hispanic Mental Health Professionals
Past President, New York State Psychological Association (2016) and
President-Elect, Forensic Division

12:30 pm Lunch

1:45pm ***Indo-Caribbean in USA: Issues of Interest & Concern***
Ashook Ramsaran, President, Indian Diaspora Council International
& Panel Organizer
Round Table Participants:
Dr. Sharla Madho-Khargi
Christine Perumal, Esq.
Prof. Ashford Maharaj
Mr. Richard David

3:30 pm ***The Immigrants' Voice***
Presenters:

Journey to a Dream
Maria Garcia, M.A. in Spanish, CLACS Post Post-Baccalaureate Certificate,
Graduate Student M.A. Sociology

Instructors and Students of the NYCDYCD CLACS Adult Literacy Program:
Linnie Folk, M.A.
Camille C. Embus Perez, M.A.
Christopher Caccavo, M.A.
Eric Jonas, M.A.

4:30 pm ***Closing Remarks***