

WHAT IS IN AN INDIAN DIASPORA NAME? THE CARIBBEAN CONTEXT

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This paper explores the East Indian experience with Indian names in the Caribbean Diaspora countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname and Jamaica. The paper looks at names and naming conventions among Hindu, Muslim and Christian East Indians, and Western influences on East Indian names in the Caribbean Diaspora countries. In this paper, the term “East Indian” differentiates the descendants of the original indentured immigrants to the Caribbean from other West Indians. East Indians who were born in the West Indies are also West Indians.

Introduction

The British ruled Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica and other smaller islands in the Caribbean for several years, and after slavery in 1838, they introduced the replacement Indian Indentureship Program in the Caribbean.

East Indians of the Caribbean are the descendants of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent and despite their name, they are not related to the native Indians who live in, or previously inhabited the area. The East Indians and Afro-Caribbeans are the main ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname. East Indians of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname comprise roughly 40%, 50% and 37% of their populations. The remainder of their populations comprises people of African, Portuguese, Chinese and European descent.

When these Indian indentured immigrants settled in the various colonies, they took with them several aspects of their culture and religion including their names. Those names were recorded in the immigration accounts of the various colonies. Those records, which are retained in archives, libraries and personal documents, are the only source of information for East Indian descendants who wish to trace their ancestry. These Indian immigration archival documents from Fiji, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago were jointly submitted to the United Nations for inclusion in the *Memory of the World Register 2011*.¹

One commonality observed in most receiving countries where there was a large group of indentured Indian immigrants was a propensity for retaining their language (Hindi), their culture (songs, music and dance) and their religion. Some countries that received large populations of indentured Indian immigrants included Fiji, Malaysia, Mauritius, Indonesia, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. In these countries because of the large East Indian population, they preserved many facets of their culture including their names. In countries such as Jamaica, Cuba,

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Guadeloupe, St. Vincent and St. Lucia that received fewer Indian indentured immigrants from India, most East Indians in those countries have lost several facets of their original culture including their names. However, in recent times, attempts have been made by various agencies to resuscitate East Indian identity and East Indian cultural patterns in those countries². Largely, most Diaspora children have preserved major aspects of their culture including culturally appropriate names despite their struggles against cultural appropriation, syncretism and cultural nationalism in countries where they live.

Names

A name is an identity symbol. It encompasses identity, religion, genealogy, language, geography, cultural regions and historical epochs. The study of names, onomastics³, and two of its associated branches, the study of personal names, anthroponomastics and the study of place names, toponomastics are some areas of study in the field of names. This paper focuses on the study of personal names, anthroponomastic or anthroponomy, with an emphasis on ethnic Indian names in the Caribbean Indian Diaspora.

Names are perhaps the oldest labels known to humanity. No clear evidence points to the first use of names by human beings but the practice of using names extends into antiquity. Early texts and mythologies such as the Vedas and the Bible are replete with names. For example, some early names mentioned in the Bible are Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:4) while the Vedas mention names such as *Manu* (second born) and *Satrupa* (beautiful face)⁴. Names, however, have an etymological meaning, which imply that they were originally words used in languages and were transmitted from generation to generation in various forms.

Legal Requirement

Names are inherited and passed on from one generation to the next and can carry information about one's roots such as family or clan names and location such as village or city names. It is now a legal requirement that serves several purposes. Most notably, it helps us distinguish one from the other. It would be difficult to refer to people if there were no names to be used, for example, instead of saying Anil, to identify someone, one might have to resort to a description that articulates something like "the tall dark man who lives on the hill near the coconut tree down the street." However, there may be more than one coconut tree and more than one hill down the street. Therefore, other lengthy elaborations may be necessary to identify the individual.

The first symbol of identity that a person gets in his or her lifetime is a name, which stays throughout life. Names are created to identify individuals. Nevertheless, a few people change their names for social, political or religious reasons. Some outstanding name changes in the local Indian Diaspora include Krishna Deonarine,

(East Indian lawyer/trade unionist) who changed his name to Adrian Cola Rienzi⁵ and Harbance Kumar (an Indian film distributor/producer) who changed his name to Mickey Nevelli⁶. In addition, when East Indians were converted to Christianity, there was generally a change of name. The Presbyterian Church insisted on changing the first names of East Indian converts, but the Catholic Church demanded a complete name change of both first and last names. For example, in the Presbyterian Church a convert such as Ramdass (servant of Ram) Singh (lion), might become Hansley Singh but in the Catholic Church, he might become David Phillip. In modern times, this practice has largely ceased and most churches including the Pentecostal churches allow converts to keep their ethnic names.

Names as Tools of Subversion

Names have been used for many purposes including identity, subversion and the subjugation of the conquered people. For example, as British influence spread through the British Empire, colonizers used the act of naming as a tool of dominance to demonstrate their power in conquered lands. Educational books were important tools in the imperial efforts at subtle indoctrination and acculturation of the conquered people. Everything English, including English names and titles, were held up to society by the colonial masters as the epitome of achievement, something to which the conquered people were expected to strive for if they were to be noticed or promoted in the colonial dominated territories including the West Indies. Young readers were taught to see English, Western ways as superior to theirs while slaves, indentured immigrants, and their descendants in the West Indies were portrayed in the most demeaning ways in public education texts and paintings. As a result, many East Indians gave up their identity for what they thought was a better life for their children⁷.

Naming Conventions

In earlier cultures, one name was generally needed to indicate a person without ambiguity. However, as cultures became more complex a single personal name became insufficient and therefore a second name was added based on specific family traits or occupation to distinguish one person from the other. Over time, these individually based second names or surnames have become standardized names retaining little descriptive resemblance to the original ancestral names that were handed down. In most Western cultures, there is the standard use of “first name” for personal name and “last name” or “surname” for family name.

However, some East Indian traditional naming conventions that were brought to the Caribbean differ because the family name was placed before the personal name. This perhaps explains why many East Indians in the Caribbean took their father’s first name as their surname. For example, Nanlal Ramcharran, whose father, Ramcharran Singh came from India, took his father’s first name as his surname and his children took his first name, Nanlal, as their surnames⁸.

During Indentureship, many Indians who were recruited were listed with only one name; however, some also had two names. When children were born, they were given a first name and a surname was appended based on the father's first name or surname. The use of the first name of parents as a surname for their children can prove problematic for genealogical research because in tracing ancestors the use of first names as reference points can prove onerous compared to the use of surnames for the same purpose. This, among East Indians in the westernized countries, is contrary to the general convention of first names and surnames. However, the use of parents' first names as surnames is gradually being abandoned in the Indian Diaspora in favor of the use of surnames or family names because of Western influences.

Names are usually influenced by one's ethnicity. Such names reflect a person's family, sociolinguistic status, religion and normative cultural patterns. However, in matters of personal identification, ethnicity is second only to gender specifications since in most cultures gender can be established from names. In essence, therefore a person's name can help define his or her identity, ethnicity, gender, religion and cultural background.

Islamic Naming Conventions

Muslim children are given Islamic first names. With few exceptions, the names of the prophets, the wives of Muhammad, and the companions of the prophet Muhammad are exceedingly common, as are Arabic names without religious connotations. Islamic names follow a formula or naming convention, which serve as a sign of an individual's faith. Converts to the religion of Islam, by these conventions, also often adopt Islamic forenames. However, many Western people make mistakes with Islamic names and are not aware of such common mistakes. According to Islamic tradition, any name that begins with "Abd" is a two-word name that cannot be separated. For example "Abdul": may be written "Abdul (something)", but "Abdul" means "servant of the" and is not, by itself, a name, but in Western countries it is used as a first name when it is only part of a first name.

Many Muslims adapt to Western conventions for practical purposes when travelling or when residing in Western countries, constructing a given name or family name model out of their full Islamic name to fit Western expectations, visa applications or other official forms and documents. For example, Wazir Ali Hakim Al Shabab Khan might be abbreviated to Wazir Khan.

In many Caribbean countries the name Mohammed, Muhammad, Hussein or Hosein, Ahmad, Ali, Baksh and Khan are commonly used as surnames for many Muslims while Jamal, Sheik, Sayed, Hakim, Rafi, Abdul, Hafez, Karim, Fatima, Akram, Malik, Rafina, Hasina, Nazim, Haniff and Waquab are commonly used as Muslim first names.

Hindu Naming Conventions

Hindus believe that names are invested with special powers. Therefore, persons in Hinduism are invested with “private” or “true” names that are used and known only by close friends and family.

Sixteen important samskaras (purificatory rites or ceremonies) are recommended in the life of a Hindu, one of which is the namkaran or naming ceremony of the child. This takes place on the tenth or twelfth day after the birth of the child. Usually, the birth name is chosen based on the person’s horoscope and differs from their official calling name. It begins with a letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, considered auspicious by Hindus. When a child is born, the parents consult a local pundit or the guru of the family who in turn checks the patra or Hindu horoscope. A name is then chosen for the child based on the consultations with the pundit. This name is not the calling name of the child but is known as the “rasi” (secret) name of the child. This is the name that the child will use when performing Hindu religious ceremonies, rituals and any important event.

There is the belief in some sections of the community that unworthy people can use the rasi name to summon evil spirits on the child. Hence, the rasi name is kept secret among members of the family. It is therefore common for East Indians in the Caribbean to have three names, generally a first name, which is a calling name, a middle name that is a rasi name and the surname. Often, many East Indians insert an initial in the place of the middle name. Reports of people growing up, working together, and never revealing to others what the middle initial of their names represent are common in Caribbean countries such as Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname.

Over time, modern Indian families in the Diaspora have begun to select names from other cultures and other countries. As more families begin to consider nontraditional names, they also continue to choose rasi names with special meanings or attributes. However, if it is accepted that names carry with them tags of cultural identity then in the movement away from traditional names in the naming of children there is the chance of the loss of ethnic identity and cultural linkages in future generations.

Hindus believe that the name of god is “very” holy and that uttering god’s name, consciously or unconsciously, has its spiritual benefits. Therefore, in Hinduism, there is a high incidence of children with names that are rooted in Hindu divinity. Adherents believe that when they call the child, they are in fact uttering the name of a god and in that manner they believe that some spiritual benefit accrues on their behalf. Besides the names of gods, Hindus also name their children after holy rivers, saintly persons, mountains and hills, Hindu mythological characters, places associated with gods, popular Hindu temples, saints and sages, great personalities, nature, seasons, celestial beings, adorable human qualities and aspects of human beauty. Most Hindu names trace their origin to the Sanskrit language.

The following are some examples of popular Hindu names in the Caribbean:

- Brahma (Worship)
- Vishnu (All Pervading)
- Shakti (Divine Power)
- Rama (Hindu Avatar)
- Krishna (Dark One)
- Lakshmi Narayan (Giver of Good Luck)
- Bhagirathi (another name for the Ganges)
- Jamuna (Holy River)
- Kaveri (River)
- Kousalya (Belonging to Kosala)
- Devaki (Black)
- Bharat (Fulfills Desire)
- Dasarath (Ten Chariots)
- Ramakrishna (Pleasing the Dark One)
- Vivekananda (Joy of Knowledge)
- Surya (Sun)
- Bhaskar (Shining Light)
- Rohini (Reddish)
- Chitra (Cheerful)
- Basant, Pritvi (earth)
- Akash (sky)
- Pawan (wind)
- Diva (day)
- Nisha (Night)
- Usha (Pre-Dawn)
- Sandhya (Twilight)
- Mallika (Jasmine)
- Kamala (Lotus)
- Roja (Rose)
- Shanti (Peace)
- Sushila (Good Conduct)
- Shobha (Glow).

Western and Christian Influence

East Indian names present some difficulties in pronunciation for most non-East Indian westerners and for that reason, many Indian Diaspora parents choose simplified or shortened East Indian names for their children in addition to English names. Names such as Subramanian (good) could become Subra and Vishwanatham (Lord of the Universe) could become Vish.

The Indian immigration records in Trinidad and Guyana suggest that many East Indians who came as indentured immigrants either had one or two Indian names⁹. The reality was that on the estates most of them used only one name, which stayed with them throughout their indentureship. As their offspring were born, they were also given East Indian names. This practice continued over the years and generally, most East Indians gave their children Hindu or Muslim names while those converted to Christianity choose Christian first names. However, in recent times, because of Western influences many East Indian parents, both Hindus and Muslims, gave their children English or Christian first names. Some were influenced by English movies while others were cognizant of the fact that they lived in a Western society and having a Western first name was a passport to employment and social opportunities in the Western world.

It was not surprising to find grave misspellings with Indian names in the Caribbean as immigration record keepers wrote the names according to how they sounded. In addition, estate recorders who were generally non-East Indians made similar mistakes. Therefore, the spelling of the same name in the immigration record and estate records sometimes differed. Even in later days when East Indians went to register the birth of a child the registrar would often enter a different spelling of the surname. It was common therefore to encounter multiple spellings of the same East Indian name in different documents.

East Indian family names in the Caribbean are based on a multiplicity of arrangements and naming conventions, which vary according to the region of India from which they came. Their names are influenced by religion and caste, which encompasses livelihood, endogamy, culture, economics, social class and politics.

Types of Names

Following in the custom of their ancestors, most East Indian names in the Caribbean are either Hindu or Islamic in origin. These names usually consist of a given name followed by one or multiple second names or no secondary names.

Personal Names, Surnames and Honorific Names

Personal or given names are used to differentiate between members of a family or a group of persons whose family name ending is usually the same. A given name is carefully chosen at birth and bestowed on a person as opposed to a family name or surname, which is inherited.

Most people have both a given name and a surname. This circumstance of having two names, a given name and the surname, however, is a recent custom, which has its origin in Great Britain during the Middle Ages¹⁰. Through conquest, travel and other means this mode of identification spread to other countries.

In Euro-American, Middle Eastern and African cultures, the family name is normally the last part of the person's name while in many Eastern and South Asian countries the family name comes first. In the Caribbean countries because family names are usually given as last names the term "last name" or "surname" is normally used to refer to the family name. In addition, surnames or family names in the Caribbean are customarily patrilineal (coming from the father's lineage). When family, friends, close associates and elders address people within their immediate circle they normally use the first name or personal name while the family name is used when addressing a stranger or someone in a formal setting. Often when someone is addressed by his or her surname an honorific title such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss, Dr., Shri, or Shree is used.

Among East Indians in the Caribbean, various honorific and relationship titles are used besides those above. Some of these include Chacha (uncle); Bhaia (brother); Bhoujie (sister-in-law); Shri, Shriman, Shrimati, guruji, (guru) and "ji" (Sir) which is appended to a person's name to show respect, for example, Rama would become Ramaji. In India during the Vedic Age when Sanskrit was the lingua franca, patronymics were common as last names. Surnames were first recorded in the Vedas where several rishi families were identified as Atris, Visvamitras, Vasiathas and Bharadvajas. One famous ancestor of a particular family or clan was identified, and related rishis were addressed as his descendants. For example, in the case of Visvamitra, one of his descendants was called MadhuchantaVisvamitra (son of [or of the lineage of] the sage Visvamitra). Later religious texts such as *Ramayana*, *Puranas*, *Mahabharata* and *Shastras* are filled with given names and surnames. In many of these texts, names are used to trace the lineage of Kings and other important people such as Rishis and Munis. For example, King Rama's lineage (King of Ayodhya) in the *Ramayana* is traced to the Suryavanch (solar race).

Nicknames

A nickname is a name sometimes given or ascribed to a person, in place of, or in addition to, the official name of the person. This nickname may be derived either from the name of the person in which case it may be a truncated version of the name for example Venkataragavan can become Venkat or Rameshwar might become Ram. Some nicknames may not be names of endearment but may be crude references to a person's physical form. For example, a fat person may be referred to as "fatso" or "moti"; a challenged person might be called "murukh" (thoughtless) while someone who is mentally unstable might be called "pagal" or "pagli" (mad). It must be noted that since not everyone welcomes all nicknames, great care should

be taken when calling someone by a nickname particularly in the East Indian community when a nickname in Hindi might be offensive. Many East Indians do not understand the language and may use offensive Hindi indiscriminately for example someone quite innocently might hear a person refer to another as “pagal” (mad) and, to his detriment, in all innocence might call the person by that name.

In some cases, nicknames are ascribed to persons based on Indian movie stars. Someone who either looks like Shammi Kapoor (an Indian actor) or dresses like him might be called Shammi or Shammi Kapoor. Likewise, a girl who mimics Hema Malini (an Indian actress) might be called Hema, or Hema Malini and these names were likely to remain with the individual for many years.

Many East Indians parents give their children pet nicknames, different from their proper names. For example, nicknames such as Gudiya (Doll), Raju (King), Bablu (Jolly), Raja (Prince), Rajkumari (Princess) and Laila (Dark-Haired Beauty) are common in the Caribbean Diaspora countries. Some parents however, never outgrow calling their children by their pet names and these children grow up with these names attached to them in both private and public settings. Some even become known popularly by their nicknames while their proper names remain unknown to many people.

Single Names

One of the greatest tributes to individuals the world over is when only one name is adequate to identify the person. Examples of such names are Napoleon, Caesar, Garbo, Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore, Kennedy, King and Tendulkar. Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were known as Gandhi and Nehru respectively, through simple contemporary fame, in which their popularity lent itself to a common interpersonal familiarity with the people. This common familiarity among the people makes one name - either a first name or a surname - sufficient to ensure precise identification of the person referred to in conversation or written work. Most celebrities however keep their original names, but are “given” these shortened “Public Names” through popularity. Some local people use, or are ascribed, nicknames or single names as stage names or public names for example Ricki Jai (Samraj Jaimungal)¹¹, Ravi B (Ravi Bissembhar)¹², JLo (Jennifer Lopez)¹³, Shammi (Kapoor)¹⁴, Rafi (Mohammed)¹⁵ and Lata (Mangeshkar)¹⁶.

The Anglicization of East Indian names in the Caribbean Diaspora

Many East Indian names in the Caribbean Indian Diaspora have been anglicized or creolized during the last century and a half and this can be traced to several reasons, some of which were associated with Christianization, mispronunciation, shortened “handle” names and continued corrupted spelling of East Indian names. Largely, the Anglicization of East Indian names took place on the plantations, in the schools and in the Christian churches. Perhaps for some East Indians, who later moved off

the plantations and settled down in the urban areas among the European creoles and Afro-Trinidadians, the process of Anglicization was welcomed.

After 1900, with the growing pressures of an expanding society and increasing pressures to prepare children for civil society jobs, many East Indians accepted Presbyterianism as a means to an end. As late as the 1960s East Indians were still being pressured into changing their names and religion to obtain teaching jobs¹⁷. One of the first requirements after the birth of a child in the Diaspora, as elsewhere, is the registration of such birth. Part of the process requires the registration of a given name for the child. In Trinidad and Guyana that the British ruled and where most birth registrars were non-East Indians, there was a tendency to register the given names and surnames based on the sound of the names.

Most East Indians before the 1970s, who went to the Registrar of births could not read or write English and gave the required information to the Registrars as best as they could. The Registrars wrote the names as they sounded to them since they were not “au courant” with the spelling of East Indian names. This led to the spelling of many East Indian names with variations in various parts of the country so Anil (air) might be spelled Anil, Aneel, Aniel or Anneil and Gupta (ruler) might be spelled Goopta, Goupta, Gooptar, or Guptar. Persad (blessed food) in Trinidad can become Persaud or Persaude in Guyana and Prasad in Suriname while Sooklal (happiness) in Trinidad can become Souklal in Guyana and Sukhlal in Suriname. It is for this reason that many East Indian names in the Caribbean are spelled entirely different to the original names or what their parents intended. Islamic names such as Uthman (chosen one) became Osman in Trinidad and Ousman in Guyana; Muhammad became Mohammed in Trinidad Mohammed in Guyana and Rahman (compassionate) became Rahaman, Raheman in Trinidad and Rayman, Raiman, Rahamun, Rahemuon, Ruhomon or Rahamourn in Guyana.

In addition, there was the corruption of many East Indian names by East Indians themselves either through lack of knowledge or pronunciation of the names. For example, the name Ramakrishna (a combination of Rama and Krishna- names of Hindu avatars) produced Ramkissoon (Trinidad) or Ramkissoun (Guyana) and Bal Krishna (meaning young Krishna) produced Balkissoon (Trinidad), Balkisun or Balkissoun (Guyana). Sadiqqe (truthful) became Sadiq (Trinidad) or Sadique (Guyana) and Aziza (beloved) became Azeez or Aziz. Bahadurshah (victory) can be broken up and become Bahadur Shah (Trinidad) or Bahadur Shaw (Guyana), Mangal (auspicious) or Mangala can become Mangal (Trinidad) or Mangol or even Mangul (Guyana). Gopala (cowherd) is likely to become Gopal (Trinidad) or Gopaul (Guyana) while any name ending in-udeen, eddin or iddin, was likely to become Deen, Dean, Deane (Trinidad), Din (Guyana) as the surname¹⁸.

Name changes are also found in literary works such as VS Naipaul’s *The Mystic Masseur* in which he refers to Ganesh Ramsumair, a Trinidadian East Indian who changed his name to G. Ramsay Muir when he went to live in England¹⁹.

With the expanded education system and introduction of Muslim and Hindu schools by the 1950s and an expansion of East Indian cultural identity in the 1970s, many East Indians returned to the ethnic naming system seeking to have their children maintain some form of ethnic identity. The rise of Chaddi Jagan and Bharath Jagdeo to the Presidency of Guyana, and Lutchmon and Misir in Suriname and BasdeoPanday and Kamla Persad Bissessar in Trinidad as Prime Ministers contributed to a return to ethnic naming processes. In addition, the growth of East Indian formatted radio stations in Suriname (1960s), Guyana and Trinidad (1990s) largely served as a drawing card in the evolution of a heightened East Indian identity and a return to ethnic naming among East Indians in the Caribbean.

Over the last half century, because of the higher percentage of East Indians receiving education, the misspellings of East Indian names that were rampant before the 1970s gradually declined, as most parents could correctly spell their children's names for the Registrars of births. In addition, this contributed to a heightened East Indian identity consciousness so that there was a decline in the conversion rate of East Indians to Christianity. In some instances, there was a return to the religious or ethnic fold by some East Indians. All these factors served to calibrate for East Indians an ethnic space that was defined by an ethnic name. Another factor that played a role over the last seventy-five years in the return to ethnic naming among East Indians was the exhibition of Indian movies in Guyana, Trinidad and Suriname.

Filmi Names

After 1935 when Indian movies became popular in Trinidad and the Caribbean some parents began to move away from the time-honoured patra (horoscope reading) derived names for their children and began naming their children after their favorite male or female Indian film stars such as Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Premnath, Dev Anand and Hema Malini. These names were non-caste and popular with the Diaspora. The practice continues today and there is a compromise by which many children are now given three names the calling name, which may be referenced to one of the Indian stars or to some aspect of Bollywood in general, a rasi name and surname. In addition, many Christian East Indian children, instead of the rasi name, are given a baptismal name, which, like the rasi name, is not the calling name of the child.

Names

The incidence of mixed names in the Indian Diaspora in the West Indies was due to conversion and mixed marriages. The need to please their parents and grandparents in the naming of off springs often resulted in mixed names. In instances of conversion, the Hindu or Islamic first names were usually dropped in favour of Christian names while the original surnames were kept. In mixed marriages

depending on the combination of parents and their backgrounds, children were usually given first names preferred by either one or both parents. Out of these combinations, a Hindu first name and a Muslim surname or first name; or a Hindu surname or a Christian first name and a Hindu or Muslim surname or combinations of those names may identify the child. There are also instances in which children are identified with three names one of which is Hindu, the other Muslim and the third Christian or English in any order as the chart below shows.

Muslim+Hindu	= Ahmad Singh
Hindu+ Muslim	= Rajesh Ali
Hindu+ Muslim + Christian	= Rajesh Ali George
Muslim + Hindu + Christian	= Ahmad Singh Phillip
Muslim + Christian + Hindu	= Sharida Mary Singh
Christian + Muslim	= Anthony Ali
Muslim + Christian	= Haniff De Souza.
Christian+Hindu+Muslim	= Monica Shanti Khan

Conclusion

Ethnic names can be a source of tension and discrimination in multiethnic societies such as those in the Caribbean Indian Diaspora. Although civic ties between different ethnic communities in the Caribbean Indian Diaspora countries exist and are propagated as desirous for peaceful coexistence, East Indian ethnic names have been a source of discrimination in terms of political power, entertainment, and employment practices. It is the right of every person to maintain his or her ethnic identity. Greater understanding of each other's cultural, religious and ethnic identities might be forthcoming if efforts are made to teach ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the school system, in the churches, temples and mosques, and in the cultural and sporting arena. The teaching of these concepts in multicultural societies such as Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname and Jamaica, at the academic level, will lend itself to greater understanding of the peoples who make up the society and may eventually lead to less crime and greater productivity.

In today's global village in which more than 25 million Indians and their descendants reside outside India in the Diaspora with instant Internet-based communication, jet travel, videoconferencing and Western influences, there is a concern about the loss of ethnic-based naming in the Diaspora. Many parents particularly those of the second and third generations and those in the third migration era have given their children "English - westernized" first names while retaining the family names. As cultural, religious, social, communication and networking borders disappear in today's global village, ethnic-based naming, which is perhaps

one of the last pillars of Diaspora ethnic identity, may well be one of the last ethnic borders to disappear. In time, Diaspora conferences like this one may be outdated since people's link with the motherland, with India, and other South Asian countries may simply be that they have descended from those countries but lack any ties to their ancestral homeland. Largely, therefore, notwithstanding the ethnic emotional attachment, national consciousness and cultural appropriations, names carry with them tags of identity, caste, cultural affinity, and psychological awareness.

In all facets of life and living in the Diaspora, the loss of one's ethnic identity through religion, culture and dress is compounded by the loss of one's ethnic name. As a matter of fact, all facets of one's ethnic identity are held together by one's ethnic name.

Notes

1. Memory of the World. UNESCO's programme aimed at the preservation and dissemination of valuable archive holdings and library collections worldwide. Records of the Indian Indentured Labourers. Countries in joint submission: Fiji, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Year of submission: 2010. Documentary heritage submitted for inclusion in the Memory of the World Register in 2011. http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=29987&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
2. *Guyana Chronicle* "East Indian Immigration, 1838–1917." TotaMangar. May 6, 2007 <http://www.landofsixpeoples.com/news702/nc0705062.html>. Retrieved 19/01/11
3. *The American Name Society* was founded in 1951 to promote onomastics, the study of names and naming practices, both in the United States and abroad.
4. *Holy Bible King James Version* 2006. Casscom Media; Griffith, Ralph T. H. *The Rig Veda: Complete*. 2008. United States: Forgotten Books.
5. Adrian Cola Rienzi (born Krishna Deonarine [1905 – 1972]) was a Trinidad and Tobago trade unionist, politician and lawyer who founded both the Oilfields Workers Trade Union and the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers Union." Michael Anthony. People of the Century Adrian Cola Rienzi Part 1 *Express* Section 2 September 6, 2000 Page 2.
6. Harbance Kumar was born in India and came to Trinidad in 1960s to distribute Indian movies. He produced the first local full length movie *The Right and The Wrong* was involved in other local productions such as *Girl From Indian* and *Man From Africa*. "Mickey Nivelli Aka Harbance Kumar - Another Subcontinent Forums." *Another Subcontinent: South Asian Society & Culture*. Web. 11 March, 2011. <<http://www.anothersubcontinent.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=1289>
7. Interview with John Jagroopsingh. Arima. Trinidad. 17 May, 2011.
8. Interview with Nanlal Ramcharran. 101 yrs. Plum Road, Sangre Grande. Trinidad. 8 Apr. 2009.
9. See National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism. Indian Immigration Records. TT NATT IM 2.
10. "Surname", Online Etymology Dictionary. Douglas Harper, Historian. December 10, 2007.
11. Rikki Jai. Rikki Jai was born Samraj Jaimungal. He performs with local Indian bands Triveni and Naya Andaz. He is a popular Calypsonian and Chutney singer.

12. Ravi Bissambhar popularly known as Ravi B is a local Chutney and film song artiste. He is leader of the band Karma. He won the Soca Monarch Chutney Competition on 2010.
13. Jlo is an abbreviation for popular Hollywood actress, Jennifer Lopez.
14. Shammi Kapoor is a famous Indian Hindi film star popular in the Diaspora from the 1950s to 1980s.
15. Popular playback singer in the Hindi film Industry. He died in 1981.
16. Popular playback singer in the Hindi film Industry. Cited by Guinness Book of World Records as the singer with the highest number of recordings in the world.
17. John Jagroopsingh.
18. Some other examples of changes in names are as follows: Ali can become Aly; Amin can become Ameen or Amina, Ameen, or Ameena; Arjun can become Arjune;; Aziz can become Azeez; Bhagwan; Bharath, Barahta - Barratt; Bihari – Beharry; Charan - Karan; Ganapati can become Ganpat; Gokul can become Gokool; Hanif or Hanifa can become Hanniff; Hussain; Hussein; Ibrahim can become Ibraheem, Rahim or Raheem; Isaac can become Isaacs; Jardine - Jardin; Kassem can become Kassim; Kedar can become Kadar; Lal can become Lall; Majid can become Majeed; Murthy, Mutee can become Motie; Narayan can become Narine Sadeq, Sadek can become Siddiq; Siddiqui - Sadeek;
19. V. S. Naipaul 2008. *The Mystic Masseur*. Vintage, New York.

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