

ABSTRACT

A History of Indian Indentured Labour: The Saint Lucia Experience,
1859 to 1903

Terencia Kyneata Joseph

This study is a culmination of research that has sought to relate the experience of the Indian indentured labour scheme in nineteenth century Saint Lucia. It addressed the relative silence in Caribbean Historiography about the early presence of Indians in Saint Lucia. Underscoring the narrative was a need to understand the specific context, and the factors which laid the foundation for the almost complete integration of Indians into the existing Saint Lucian Creole culture. The research is a qualitative survey that relies heavily on contemporary primary sources. The narrative was pieced together by applying a modified version of Kamau Braithwaite's Caribbean Creolisation theory.

The study demonstrates that the experience of Indian indentured labour in Saint Lucia was reflective of the experience in other Caribbean territories, but it also highlights that the experience differed in important ways. Thus, the study sheds

light on the nature of the elements present within the physical and social environments that were instrumental in the creation of the peculiar character of Saint Lucian Indian indentureship. Among the elements, topography, and the language context were significant influences. These factors impacted the process and the rate at which Creolisation occurred. Thus, the conclusions drawn are significant for a fuller appreciation of the spectrum of experiences that contributed to the making of the Indo-Caribbean Diaspora.

Keywords: Terencia Kyneata Joseph; Creolisation; Saint Lucia; Indian indentured labour; sugar economy; history.