

Suriname



I Country Features:

Suriname got Independence from the Netherlands in 1975. Five years later the civilian government was replaced by a military regime that soon declared a socialist republic. It continued to rule through a succession of nominally civilian administrations until 1987, when international pressure finally forced a democratic election. In 1990, the military overthrew the civilian government, but a democratically elected government returned to power in 1991.)

Population: 439,117

Religious Group: Hindu 27.4%, Protestant 25.2% (predominantly Moravian), Roman Catholic 22.8%, Muslim 19.6%, indigenous beliefs 5%

Ethnic Community: Hindustani (also known locally as "East Indians";) 37%, Creole (mixed white and black) 31%, Javanese 15%, "Maroons" (their African ancestors were brought to the country in the 17th and 18th centuries as slaves and escaped to the interior) 10%, Amerindian 2%, Chinese 2%, white 1%, other 2%

Economy: The economy is dominated by the mining industry, which accounts for more than a third of GDP and subjects government revenues to mineral price volatility. The short-term economic outlook depends on the government's ability to control inflation and on the development of projects in the bauxite and gold mining sectors. Suriname's economic prospects for the medium term will depend on continued commitment to responsible monetary and fiscal policies and to the introduction of structural reforms to liberalize markets and promote competition. Prospects for local onshore oil production are good, as a drilling program is underway. Offshore oil drilling was given a boost in 2004 when the State Oil Company (Staatsolie) signed exploration agreements with Repsol, Mearsk, and Occidental.

Labour Force Participation: agriculture 8%, industry 14%, services 78%

II Demographic Features of the Diaspora

Dual citizenship, a passport for global Indians to acquire civil rights in their native land, is not a big issue for over 150,000 persons of Indian origin (PIOs) in Suriname.

1. Brief history of Diaspora

The Indians, mainly from northern India, were taken to Suriname in the 19th century when the Dutch used to bring in slaves from Western Africa.

The 19th century immigrants belonged to Indian states of Bihar and East-Uttar Pradesh. The total size of the Indian immigration, which started on June 04 1873

until December 1916(some say January 1917) has been approximate 38,000 persons although official records speak of between 36 and 38,000. It must be mentioned that in 1868 there were already about 2500 Indian immigrants in Suriname whom came as free labourers from former British Guyana. .It is said that approximately 125,000 Indians left Suriname at the time of independence for holland therefore the Indian Diaspora in Holland was founded by the diaspora from Suriname.

Trade relations between India and Suriname are currently restricted to small imports from India by PIOs.

2. Profile of Indian Diaspora

The country shares a curious relationship with India as 37 per cent of its 431,000-strong population is of Indian origin.

The Indian Diaspora provides for almost 43% of all higher educated persons (university level) in almost all disciplines whereby Law, Medicine and Economics are the top disciplines.

Most importantly, all university students today 60% is from the Indian Diaspora and out of that 65% are female. In general people from the diaspora work in Agriculture, Business, Industry and Government whereas Indian diaspora has control 70% of LAW, MEDICINE, IT, ENGINEERING. There are about 40% in Education.

In the economy 45% of BUSINESS is controlled by the Indian diaspora while Indians share in banking and Insurance is 45%, General Trade 50%, Transport and Travel 40% , Fishing 45% and Politics is controlled for 39%.

3. Size of Diaspora:

Today, Indian Diaspora in Netherlands (Holland) is about 200,000, whereas in Suriname according to the census (2000) is 265,000.

4. Known Distinguished Diaspora

The most well know person from the DIASPORA has been Mr. Jagernath LACHMON, who has been the leader of the Indians for 57% and he passed away in 2001.

5. Diaspora Publications

The best publiaction is the website about the indian diaspora where all names of the immigrants have been published the site is: www.nationaalarchief.nl/suriname. The only problem is that it is in DUTCH.

6. Concerns and Problems of Indian Diaspora

Perhaps the only thing that is expected from Indian government is more steps towards enhancing trade and cultural ties through the links of a shared past.

The biggest problem of the Indian Diaspora is inner rivalry in politics there are no external problems because when that would happen history is our proof that Indians then clit together.

7. Diaspora Relations

There is a very good relation with all other disapora in the country. Chinese, Jews, Indonesian, Libanese and the african diaspora has regrettably not developed as yet but they are working on

8. Local Laws affecting Indian Diaspora

Suriname ha maximum number of PIO and they are citizen of Suriname.

9. Diaspora Associations

GOPIO