

## Trinidad & Tobago



### I Demographic features of the country:

Unlike most of the English-speaking Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago is a primarily industrialised country whose economy is based on petroleum and petrochemicals. People of Indian and African descent make up almost 80% of the population, while the remainder are mostly mixed race with small European, Chinese and Syrian-Lebanese minorities. Trinidad and Tobago is famous for its pre-Lenten Carnival and as the birthplace of steelpan and limbo.

Trinidad's East Indian culture came to the island with indentured servants brought to fill a labor shortage created by the emancipation of the African slaves in 1833. Most remained on the land, and they still dominate the agricultural sector, but many have become prominent in business and the professions. East

Indians have retained much of their own way of life, including Hindu and Muslim religious festivals and practices.

**Capital:** Port-of-Spain

**Population** 1,175,523 (July 2000 est.)

**Age Structure:**

*0-14 years:* 20.1% (male 109,936/female 104,076)

*15-64 years:* 71.3% (male 398,657/female 361,093)

*65 years and over:* 8.6% (male 41,162/female 50,918) (2006 est.)

**Ethnic groups:** Indian (South Asian) 40%, African 37.5%, mixed 20.5%, other 1.2%, unspecified 0.8% (2000 census)

**Economy:**

Trinidad and Tobago, the leading Caribbean producer of oil and gas, has earned a reputation as an excellent investment site for international businesses. Tourism is a growing sector, although not proportionately as important as in many other Caribbean islands. The economy benefits from low inflation and a growing trade surplus. Prospects for growth in 2006 are good as prices for oil, petrochemicals, and liquefied natural gas are expected to remain high, and foreign direct investment continues to grow to support expanded capacity in the energy sector. The government is coping with a rise in violent crime.

**Labour force Participation:**

Agriculture 9.5%, manufacturing, mining, and quarrying 14%, construction and utilities 12.4%, services 64.1% (1997 est.)

## **II Indian Diaspora**

### **1 Demographic Features of Indian Diaspora:**

A majority of Indo-Trinidadians are Hindu; large minorities are Muslim or belong to one of several Christian denominations. The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago is predominantly Indo-Trinidadian. Three national holidays, Indian Arrival Day, Diwali and Eid-ul-Fitr are primarily celebrated by Indo-Trinidadians. The Opposition United National Congress draws most of its support from the Indo-Trinidadian community.

### **2 Geographical Spread of the Indian Diaspora**

Most of the Indians reside in Trinidad

### **3 Size of Indian Diaspora**

According to Trinidad & Tobago Census (2000), Size of Indian Diaspora is **4,26,336**.

### **4 Profile of Indian Diaspora**

Indo-Trinidadians have retained their distinctive culture, but function in a multi-racial milieu. The Bhojpuri-Hindi, Urdu and Tamil languages of their ancestors have largely been lost, although a number of these words have entered the Trinidadian vernacular. Bollywood movies, Indian music and Indian cooking have entered the mainstream culture of Trinidad and Tobago. Chutney music rivals calypso and soca music during the Carnival season. Diwali and Eid ul-Fitr are national holidays, and Hosay (Ashura) Phagwah is widely celebrated.

## **5 Brief History of Migration:**

The Indo-Trinidadian population originates from indentured labourers brought to work in sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833. The first Indians arrived in Trinidad on May 30, 1845. The immigration of indentured Indians continued until 1917 when it was banned by the government of India. Most of these immigrants came from places in the United Provinces where Bhojpuri is spoken. A significant minority came from Madras presidency or present day Tamil Nadu where Tamil and Telugu were spoken.

A substantial minority of Indo-Trinidadians trace their ancestry to indentured labourers who immigrated to Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent, Grenada or other islands in the Caribbean. A few are descendants of later immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka, predominantly doctors and Gujarati businessmen.

## **6 Known Distinguish Diaspora:**

- Mervyn M. Dymally, California State Assemblyman, former U.S. Congressman and former Lieutenant Governor of California.
- Noor Hassanali, former President.
- V. S. Naipaul, Nobel Prize-winning author.
- Basdeo Panday - former Prime Minister, current Leader of the Opposition.
- Lakshmi Persaud - novelist
- Sundar Popo - pioneer of Chutney music.
- Sonny Ramadhin-cricketer.
- Jean Ramjohn-Richards, current First Lady.
- Samuel Selvon,- Author.

## 7 Diaspora Publications

Selvon began- publications

- ***A Brighter Sun***, - which is set in Trinidad and explores peasant experience during socio-economic change. . . .
- ***The Lonely Londoner***, - focus on the everyday experience of islanders in Trinidad.
- ***Moses Ascending*** (1975)- A sequel to ***The Lonely Londoner***
- ***Moses Migrating*** (1983)

## V.S. Naipual novels

## 8 Diaspora Relation

Have cordial relationship with other diaspora community

## 9 Local laws

Indian have assimilated in T & T culture therefore do not have any problem

## 10 Concerns and Problems of Diaspora

- Need more support from Motherland (India) in terms of maintaining culture & sociological ties.

## 11 Diaspora Association

- A major Hindu organisation in Trinidad is the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha led by Satnarayan Maharaj.
- The major Muslim organisation is the Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association (ASJA) led by Yacoob Ali. Although these organisations were once seen to speak for the vast majority of Hindus and Muslims in Trinidad, their membership has gradually eroded.
- GOPIO chapter