

## SCHOLARS AND AFRO-INDIANS

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Research work, whether empirical or descriptive, cannot be undertaken without adequate familiarity with the existing body of literature in the broad area of research. The research interlinks diverse perspectives given in literature and attempts in-depth and more comprehensive understanding of a problem, thereby expanding the horizons of knowledge in the field. Thus, review of literature related to the concern topic is an important fragment of the research work. The central objective of this paper is to review the literature on African Diaspora and on its spread in the Indian subcontinent. Accordingly, the available literature in this field is being reviewed here.

Most recent book on African Diaspora in India is *The African Diaspora in India: Assimilation, Change and Cultural Survivals* by Purnima Mehta Bhatt (2018)<sup>1</sup> explores the subject of African presence in India. She focuses on cultural assimilation and survivals of the Sidis, who occupy a unique place in Indian history. The Sidis comprise scattered communities of people of African descent who travelled and settled in many parts of south Asian continent and have left a strong impression on these societies.

The Study on *African Diaspora in India: A Historical study*<sup>2</sup> covers various aspects related to Africans who are now profoundly assimilated into social fabric of India. The fields which are more focused are Diaspora, in a broader sense, African migration with the special reference to Indian Ocean trade, the two African kingdoms, *Janjira* and *Sachin*, socio-economic condition of Siddis and their role and place in Indian society. Hindu Puranas explain the Indian trade relations with Rome, Greece,

<sup>1</sup> Purnima Mehta Bhatt, *The African Diaspora in India: Assimilation, Change and Cultural Survivals* Routledge, London: 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Manish Karmwar. *African Diaspora in India: A Historical Study*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of African Studies, University of Delhi, Delhi. (2001-2011).

Egypt and eastern Africa before the birth of Christ, show the earliest recorded African Migration to Ancient India. Writings of Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, Periplus, and Cosmos also indicate the ancient trade relation between Indian Sub-Continent and east African coast. There are traces of African's role in socio-political and military life during the period of Delhi sultanate, Nizamshahi, Adilshahi, Qutbshahi, Imadshahi, Mughal India and also in Hyderabad till India's independence. India had first trade with Arab then Portuguese through whom Africans came in contact. Much before the arrival of the Portuguese in India, a significant number of African had already occupied the seats of power, not only in armies and naval forces of various rulers, but also in civil administration. The study covers the areas where African dispersal is more prominent like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Daman and Diu, Goa and Andhra Pradesh. It discusses about several Africans who played an important role in different Indian dynasties. Some of the Africans who rose to positions of considerable importance were: Malik Kafur, Malik Amber, Malik Sarwar, Mubarak Shah, Ibrahim Shah, Malik Andil, Malik Sandal, Yaqut Dabuli Habshi, Ikhlas Khan, Dilawar Khan, Khavass Khan and Ulugh Khan. Their role in the History of India is significant. The study tries to convince the fact and therefore, concludes that Indian culture has been enriched, influenced by the African culture and African Diaspora played a significant role in socio-political and economic condition of India.

Uncovering the History of Africans In Asia edited by Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Jean pierre Angenot (2008)<sup>3</sup> deals with the several issues regarding Africans in Asia, their Role, Prospect and future. This book contains ten chapters including a general instruction excluding a forward note by Tukumbi Lumumba kasongo and extensive biography on the Afro-Asian Diaspora. The central theme of this book is why, how and when had Africans found themselves in Asia. Which parts of Africa did these Africans originated from? This edited book is a work of reference that can stimulate further debates about the contributions of Africans in the Contemporary world. This is one of the useful book for area studies because contributors are well known researchers from their respective fields and they took up a very important issue which deals with the several aspects of Afro-Asian Diaspora. The work dealing with the specific historical, physical and social movements or migration of Africans or Blacks in Asia over the centuries is clearly a complex historical, sociological, ethnographic and pioneering work. The value of this work lies in the fact that the authors have diverse academic and cultural backgrounds and that they are intellectually located within the major schools of

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<sup>3</sup> Jayasuriya, Shihan de Silva and Jean pierre Angenot(eds), *Uncovering the History of Africans in Asia*. Brill, Leiden and Boston: 2008.

thoughts in their various disciplines and interests. Also, the book is published at a time when the real and potential political debates about ethnicity in its various dimensions are, in most cases, fused and reduced in the languages of religions, power struggles, and in the forms of international security and capitalist regionalism. This work covers many subtopics such as the nature of the relationship between Africans and the Arabs who live in Africa and are Africans, the Arabs in the Middle east, Buddhism, Hinduism, the Indian involvement in the commercialization of the slave trade before the transatlantic slave trade, the lack of the intellectual and historical recognition of the African presence in the conventional historiography, etc. Migration of Africans to Asia, both free and forced, has gone on for several centuries. Yet there is little awareness of an African presence in Asian countries. The extent of their acceptance to kinship networks, marginalization and lack of political clout may partially account for their low profile.

John Hawley (2008)<sup>4</sup> in *India in Africa, Africa in India* touches the long-lasting contact among these two areas, showing that the Indian Ocean world offers numerous instances of traditional movements that acceptance our understanding of globalization as a fresh spectacle. This region has had, and continues to have, an inner truthfulness that traces the exists of its inhabitants in their trade, their cultural interactions, and their notions of each other and of themselves in the world. The interdisciplinary volume come from the fields of history, literature, dance, sociology, gender studies, and religion, making this collection exclusive for everyone.

Another book on African Diaspora in India is *African Elites in India: Habshi Amarat*.<sup>5</sup> This Book is divided into three parts, each devoted to the presence of Africans in different aspects of political-economic and cultural life throughout history. These essays provide a tapestry of historical information on the activities and contributions of Africans in India. Each part begins with a detailed account of the African engagement in the political history of the region under study. *Richard M. Eaton's*<sup>6</sup> observation is special in this regard as he points out that African slave were prized in India for their martial prowess. Their military ability was one of the main reasons for their upward mobility on the social scale, so much so that they rose to command senior positions in the military and political arena. Notably thus, birth was not the only factor determining the rank of a person in

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<sup>4</sup> John C. Hawley (ed.), *India In Africa, Africa In India Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanisms*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis:2008.

<sup>5</sup>Kenneth X. Robbins and John Mcleod (eds), *African Elites in India:Habshi Amarat* (Ahmedabad:Maping Publishing Pvt. Ltd.,2006).

<sup>6</sup>Richard M. Eaton is professor of History at the University of Arizona. Among his many publications are *The Sufis of Bijapur: Social Role of Sufis in Medieval India*(1978),*The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760* (1993).

medieval society; one's usefulness in sustaining the feudal structure was also of vital importance.

In the recent book "*Siddis and Scholars*",<sup>7</sup> which is a collection of essays, *Edward A. Alpers*<sup>8</sup> provides a survey of the African presence in India by placing those experiences in the wider context of the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean world. His chapter is followed by a joint paper by two archaeologists, *J. Mark Kenoyer*<sup>9</sup> and *Kuldeep K. Bhan*,<sup>10</sup> who have worked together for many years at the major Indus Valley site of Harappa. They propose that the history of Siddis in north-west India and Pakistan, and especially that of the important Sufi leader Gori Pir, should be located in the historical context of the development and expansion of the ancient agate bead industry. The next two papers address issues at the shrine of Gori Pir on a hill in Gujarat. The first, by *Helene Basu*,<sup>11</sup> discusses the ways in which Siddis have struggled to maintain control of this sacred site over the past two decades and how their loss of control over its administration has affected them as a community. *Prita Meier's*<sup>12</sup> chapter is based on a short visit to the shrine, but she succeeds in placing the performance she observed there in its widest, global setting as it bears upon Sidi identity. The following three papers shift the geographical focus of the volume to the very different Sidi communities of Uttara Kannara, but their focus remains on performance and the meanings that can be

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<sup>7</sup> Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Edward A. Alpers (eds), *Siddis and Scholars: Essays on African Indians* (Noida: Rainbow publishers, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Edward A. Alpers, Ph.D., is Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has also taught at the Universities of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (1966-68), and the Somali National University, Lafoole (1980). In 1994 he served as President of the African Studies Association, the largest international scholarly association devoted to the study of Africa. He has published widely on the history of East Africa and the Indian Ocean and is currently writing a political economy of eastern Tanzania in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is also engaged in research on the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean. His major publications include *Ivory and slaves in East Central Africa* (1975), *Walter Rodney: Revolutionary and Scholar*, co-edited with Pierre-Michel Fontaine (1982), and *History, memory and Identity*, co-edited with Vijaylakshmi Teelock (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, Ph.D., Professor in Anthropology teaches archaeology and ancient technology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His main focus is on the Indus Valley civilization and he has worked in Pakistan and India for the past 27 years. He has a special interest in ancient technologies and crafts, which has led him to study a broad range of cultural periods in South Asia, including the agate bead makers and Sidi communities of Gujarat.

<sup>10</sup> Kuldeep K. Bhan, Ph.D., is a Reader in the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. He teaches Cultural Anthropology, South Asian Archaeology, Ethno archaeology, and Experimental Archaeology. At present he is engaged in writing a book on the craft and technology of the Indus Valley civilization along with Prof. J.M. Kenoyer and Dr. Massimo Vidale. Recently he curated a temporary exhibition on the above theme in the Department Museum. During the last five years Bhan has been excavating an important Harappan site on the Gulf of Kachch in Gujarat, India.

<sup>11</sup> Helene Basu, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at the Department of Anthropology, Free University of Berlin. Her research engages with popular and transnational religion, gender and cultural constructions of history/memory in South Asia (Hindu and Muslim) as well as in diasporic settings. She has published the first ethnography on Sidi ways of life in Gujarat. Another major study is concerned with practices of female ascetics that are contextualized in regional productions of genealogical knowledge.

<sup>12</sup> Prita Sandy Meier is a Ph.D. in the History of Art and Architecture Department of Harvard University. Prita's dissertation research focuses on 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century urban spaces on the Swahili coast and how architectural forms and concepts were accessed by various individuals and groups to engender particular readings of history and identity.

attached to performance and the construction of identity.

The next two chapters complicate issues of identity and performance even further. Filmmaker *Beheroze shroff*,<sup>13</sup> a Parsi devotee of Gori pir since childhood, introduces us to the sacred community of which she and her family are a part and explores how her filming of these Siddis has caused her to confront mutual issues of identity. Finally, a senior historian, *Jayanti Patel*<sup>14</sup> concludes the volume by reminding us that, the Siddis of Gujarat and Karnataka deserve better opportunities and security in which to pursue their individual and community development and well-being.

*Shanti Sadiq Ali*<sup>15</sup> provides a historical overview of the African heritage in India from medieval to modern times. She focuses on African dispersal in the Deccan region covering modern Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, the Coromandel Coast and western coastal India. She opines that the various parts of India; the East African littoral states and the Red Sea region of the continent, and the Arabian coast, because of their accessibility to the Indian Ocean, have been subject to a long history of commercial contacts, cultural influences and population movements. Ali throughout the book has gone into the details of Muslim Penetration of the Deccan; the Afaqi-Dakhani Feuds under the Bahmanis; the Nizamshahi Dynasty; the Bijapur Kingdom; Golkonda, Berar and Khandesh; the Siddis of Janjira; the importation of Arabs and Africans into Hyderabad; the Portuguese and the Slave Trade; the Siddis of Karnataka and the Africans on the Coromandel Coast.

She has given a special focus on the role of the Portuguese in the slave trade in India. The slave trade was very valuable for the Portuguese in India particularly in Goa and Daman since the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Portuguese brought large number of slaves from Africa, particularly Mozambique to Goa and sold them to the highest bidder. They were given very cruel treatment. It was only the mid-nineteenth century under British pressure, and with the wave of liberalism in Portugal, that slavery was abolished. By then Portuguese power in India was on the decline. Slavery in the

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<sup>13</sup> Beheroze Shroff, M.A., M.F.A. (English, and Film and Television Production) is a documentary filmmaker who teaches part time in the Asian American Studies Department of the University of California, Irvine, Shroff's films and videos have explored several issues concerning women. *Sweet Jail: The Sikhs of Yuba City* deals with issues of immigration and gender in the pioneering Sikh community of California. *Reaching for Half the Sky* focuses on women's groups in India, and *A Life before Death* explores the sexual exploitation of joginis in a region of Andhra Pradesh. *Voices of the Sidis* – Part one is her recently completed twenty-one minute video in a series that will explore the life of Sidis in Gujarat.

<sup>14</sup> Jayanti K. Patel is a retired faculty member of the School of Social Sciences, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. A founder member and past vice-president of the African Studies Society of India (ASSI), he is currently President of the Indian Radical Humanist Association, an affiliate of the International Ethical Humanism Association (IEHU).

<sup>15</sup> Shanti Sadiq Ali, *The African Dispersal in the Deccan: From Medieval to Modern Times* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1996).

Portuguese territories was formally abolished in 1869. The last chapter of the book deals with manumitted slaves in India. On the whole Ali has systematically and succinctly depicted the role Africans played in the society with ample case studies. She has shown that now as part of the indigenous population, they follow the local customs and traditions and speak the local language while at the same time maintaining their distinctive identity.

*Dr. R.R.S. Chauhan*<sup>16</sup> brings to light an authentic account of the wonderful story of African Diaspora in India from the earliest period till 1992. He explains how the people of African Origin shipped to India as slaves, played a unique role in shaping the history and destiny of India by joining the militaries and navies at several places much before the arrival of Portuguese. They worked as slaves, as soldiers and sailors, as traders and diplomats. They became criminals and pirates, Kingmakers and commanders, Wazirs of Nizamshahas and Adilshahas, feudatory Of the Portuguese, Royal admirals under the Great Mughals and Nawabs of the states-Janjira Danda-Rajpuri, Sachin, Adoni, Jafarabad, Alambaram etc., besides their march from slavery to Royalty. They captured Janjira the oldest and strongest sea fort and made it invincible. Their occupation of several other places including the forts shows them as protectors of sea-borne trade and Haj Pilgrims from Indian ports especially at the richest port of Mughal India-Surat. They fought with the British, spread terror and enslaved the people along the west coast, looted ships and defied the Europeans, committed murders of Kings in Bengal, Fidalgos in Goa and the gentry including Mahmud Gowan and Chand Bibi and humbled the Portuguese and the British and yet secured their help; they had secret ties with the Dutch, played unknown role in Revolt of 1857. The book extols the survival of the ethnic black community in India, its place in Indian society and all of their cultural attributes with a strong plea to recruit them in Indian navy and sports where their genetic potential can be fully exploited.

A Ph.D. scholar *D.R. Banaji* has worked on the topic “*Relations between the Marathas and the Siddis of Janjira*”. Later on, it was published in a book form.<sup>17</sup> It is a study of the political relations between the Marathas and the Siddis of Janjira which an interesting topic in the history of the Marathas is. He writes that in spite of the attempts of the Marathas to destroy the rule of the Siddis, the dynasty survived on the west coast of India and remained as one of the Indian states under the British. The Marathas rose to prominence under Malik Ambar, the Wazir of Nizam Shah. For some time Shahaji was the right-hand man of Malik Ambar. Strangely enough, it was also Malik

<sup>16</sup> R.R.S.Chauhan, *Africans in India: From Slavery to Royalty* (New Delhi: Asian Publication Service, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> D.R..Banaji, *Bombay and the Siddis* (Bombay: Macmillan, 1932).

Ambar who appointed the Siddis in the fort of Janjira. Shivaji made several attempts at reducing the Siddis but achieved little success. Many a pitched battle was fought between the Marathas and the Siddis. The attempts of the Marathas to capture Underi from the Siddis were unsuccessful.

The Siddis had made much headway in the Maratha territories after the execution of Sambhaji. Balaji Vishwanath along with Kanhoji Angre invaded the territory of the Siddis. The Siddis were defeated and were forced to agree to the terms of the treaty beneficial to the Marathas which took place on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1715. The Siddis were deprived of much of their power and prestige. Siddis Abdul Rahim appointed Siddis Abdul Karim Yakut Khan Alias Balu Mian as his successor. Abdul Rahim died in the year 1784. On 6<sup>th</sup> June 1791, Balu Mian entered into agreement with the Marathas to hand over Janjira to the Peshwa in return for a jageer in Gujarat equal in revenue to Janjira. This proved merely a paper agreement and Janjira was never transferred to the Marathas. Bajirao II negotiations with the English, in vain, but Bajirao II tried to maintain his right to invade Janjira. The Maratha independence came to a de-facto end in 1802, when Baji Rao II accepted subsidiary alliance, though its de-jure end came in 1818. The Siddis continued to enjoy the State as a British protectorate.

*Ivan Van Sertima*<sup>18</sup> and *Runoko Rashidi*<sup>19</sup> argue that blacks were a formative civilizing influence on Asian societies. Presenting their case with persuasive eloquence and research, the authors examine cultural forms, art motifs, weapons, scripts, and skeletal evidence to link Asian civilizations to Africa's Nile Valley. Articles detail both the physical and cultural presence of Africans in Asia. Topics covered include the black presence and heavy intermittent influence in Sumer, Elam, and Arabia; contributions of Dravidians and Ethiopian blacks to the Indus Valley civilizations; the

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<sup>18</sup> Ivan van Sertima is a Guyanese historian, linguist and anthropologist at Rutgers University. Van Sertima was an undergraduate at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, where he graduated with honours. Van Sertima began his teaching career as an instructor at Rutgers in 1972, and Professor of African studies in the Department of Africana Studies. He is the editor of the Journal of African Civilization, and the author of the book *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America*. In 1983 he edited a book titled *Blacks in Science: Ancient and Modern*. He also treated that topic in his contribution to the volume *African Renaissance*, published in 1999 as a record of the conference held in Johannesburg in September 1998 on the theme of the African Renaissance. Some of his works include *Blacks in Science*, *Nile Valley Civilizations*, *African Presence in Early America*, *Black Women in Antiquity*, *Egypt Revisited*, *Egypt: Child of Africa*, *African Presence in Early Europe*, *Golden Age of the Moor*, *African Presence in the Art of the Americas*, *Great Black Leaders*, *Great African Thinkers* (co-edited with Larry Obadele Williams), and *African Presence in Early Asia* (co-edited with Runoko Rashidi). In 1998 Transaction Press produced Van Sertima's *Early America Revisited*, the definitive statement on the subject.

<sup>19</sup> Runoko Rashidi is a late-20th c. historian, researcher, writer, world traveler, and public lecturer based in Los Angeles. Runoko Rashidi focuses on the African presence globally and what he claims to be the African foundations of world civilizations. He is particularly drawn to the African presence in Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Islands, and has coordinated historic educational group tours to India, Aboriginal Australia, the Fiji Islands and Southeast Asia as well as Egypt and Brazil. His academic focus is in "the Black foundations of world civilizations". He has conducted research into the Black presence in Asia.

history of the first Chinese emperor, Fu-Hsi; the origin of martial arts; parallels between Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Jesus; and the nature of Slavery in Arabia and Asia.

*Joseph E. Harris*<sup>20</sup> has made an invaluable contribution to the ongoing discovery of Africa's central role in human history. Africa has witnessed the birth of many important developments in history. Human evolution, including the use of fire, food production via plant cultivation and animal domestication, as well as the creation of sophisticated tools and hunting weapons from iron took place in Africa. Other historical events such as the slave trade, which played a critical role in Western economic power, the rise of Islam as one of the world's dominant religion, and colonization and struggles for independence occurred on African soil. *Africans and their History* chronicles provide a fascinating detail about African history, from prehistoric times to the present. This concise and authoritative overview of the diverse peoples and societies of Africa covers many events, including the emergence of free South Africa and its landmark enactment of a constitution that recognizes even more rights than the American constitution. The dynamic history and the relationship Africans have with the rest of the world is revealed in *Africans and their history*, exposing and shattering ugly stereotypes that for too long have dominated Western thought. In a profound way Joseph E. Harris has been a guardian of the long and rich pan-Africanist tradition. He has carefully documented the pioneering contributions of a community of earlier scholars and practitioners who fought to advance the study of African cultures and civilizations at a time “when African studies had virtually no academic status in the United States and little impact among philanthropists”.

Particularly noteworthy is Harris's two volume collection of the papers of William Hansberry, *Pillars in Ethiopian History* (1974) and *Africa and Africans as seen by Classical Writers* (1977). Six years later Harris published his monograph *The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade* (1971). One of the first scholarly explorations of the exportation of captives from the Swahili Coast and Red Sea to South Asia over a five-century period, it also reconstructs the broad outlines of the history of African communities in Bombay, Gujarat, Hyderabad, and Bengal. Although the evidentiary base was necessarily thin, and some might question whether Harris was attentive enough to the quite different social realities on the ground in these diverse locations, it was pioneering work on the diaspora which opened up many new lines of inquiry. Central to this story is the way slaves and their free descendants struggled to improve their lives while retaining a sense of their

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph E. Harris is a professor of history at Howard University. He is the author of several academic books on African history.



African identity. Contrary to previous assumptions, the former slaves neither disappeared nor were swallowed up by the local communities. The study also documents the survival of secluded African communities in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran. Although these communities fell beyond the gaze of most scholars, the central proposition of the book is that despite their isolation and invisibility, these overseas communities “had a substantial impact on the course of Asian and African history and culture.” Over the next thirty years Harris “dedicated himself to the investigation of other communities of African descent in the world and to assessing the nature and extent of their link to Africa”. During this Period, he wrote more than a half-dozen books exploring the diverse Migratory and settlement patterns of Africans throughout the world. He reconstructed the experiences of captives, sailors, soldiers, missionaries, adventurers, artists, and entertainers living in very different economic, Cultural and political contexts beyond the African continent, and of those who ultimately returned to their homeland. This body of Scholarship highlights the complex and varied material and symbolic Links of the descendants of slaves and freeman with Africa and their host societies. Harris's work anticipated important debates about identity Politics and historical memory and it underscores the proposition that the African Diaspora “is both a process and a condition”.

In addition to carrying out his own research, *Harris* edited *The Global Dimensions of the Africa Diaspora* (1982). Its central premise is that, the global heritage of African people needs to be understood as “an Extension of African history”. This collection helped to reshape the field by bringing the Diaspora back into African studies as an important area of scholarly inquiry. Twenty years later, it remains “a seminal Publication”.

A comprehensive study of the Eastern slave trade is done by an eminent British scholar *Ronald Segal*<sup>21</sup> a companion volume of his work “*The Black Diaspora*”,<sup>22</sup> describes the fascinating and horrifying story of the Islamic slave trade. “*Islam Black Slaves*”<sup>23</sup> documents a centuries-old institution that still survives and traces the business of slavery and its repercussions from Islam's inception in the seventh century, through its history in China, India, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, and Spain, and on to Sudan and Mauritania, where, even today, slaves continue to be sold. Ronald Segal reveals for the first time the numbers involved in this trade as many millions as were transported to

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<sup>21</sup> Ronald Segal, the South African-born anti-apartheid activist, writer and editor who founded the Penguin African Library. He was the author of 13 books including *The Anguish of India*, *The Americans and The Black Diaspora*. His 2001 book, *Islam's Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora* offers one of the first historical accounts of the Islamic slave trade.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald Segal, *The Black Diaspora* (New York: Noonday press, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Ronald Segal, *Islam Black Slave: The other Black Diaspora* (New York: Farrar Strauss and Giroux, 2001).

the Americas--and explores the differences between the traffic in the East and the West. "Islam's Black Slaves" also examines the continued denial of the very existence of this sector of the black Diaspora, although it survives today in significant numbers; and in an illuminating conclusion, Segal addresses the appeal of Islam to African-American communities, and the perplexing refusal of Black Muslim leaders to acknowledge black slavery and oppression in present-day Mauritania and Sudan. A fitting companion to Segal's previous work, "Islam's Black Slaves" is a fascinating account of an often-unacknowledged tradition, and a riveting cross-cultural commentary.

The *Black Diaspora* depicts the enthralling story of African-descended people outside Africa, spanning more than five centuries and a dozen countries of settlement, from Britain, Canada, and the United States to Haiti, Guyana, and Brazil. Ronald Segal's account begins in Africa itself, with the cultures and societies flourishing there before the arrival of the Atlantic slave trade, which transported over ten million people to the Americas, after killing at least as many in their procurement and passage. He examines the extent of the profits made through the trade by merchants, manufacturers, investors, and planters, along with the racist ideology that developed as whites strove to rationalize an enormous economic dependence. Segal describes the various ways in which the system of slavery developed and provides the most comprehensive account to date of the resistance by the slaves themselves, from escape and arson to guerrilla warfare and revolution. When emancipation finally came, the former slaves were left in the fetters of poverty and discrimination. Segal details the course of the struggle against colonial rule and the racial oppressions of self-styled democracies. In recounting his own travels through the Diaspora, he shows the continuing plight of peoples confined by the consequences of the past and the prejudices of the present: racked by violence, as in Jamaica and the Ghettos of America; denied the right to assert their sense of identity, as in Cuba; acknowledged only to be repudiated, as in Brazil. Yet this is also, Segal reveals, a Diaspora of wondrous achievement. It has immeasurably enriched world culture in music, language and literature, painting, sculpture and architecture; has done much to make sports a form of art; and has invested Western culture with the ecological reverence derived from its African source. Segal argues that the black Diaspora has a unique destiny, infused by the love of freedom that is its creative impulse.

The most recent research by *Michael A. Gomez*<sup>24</sup> on the history and experiences of people of African descent outside of the African continent. By incorporating Europe and North Africa as well as North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Gomez shifts the discourse on the African

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<sup>24</sup> Michael A. Gomez (ed.), *Diasporic Africa: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

Diaspora away from its focus solely on the Americas, underscoring the fact that much of the movement of the people of African descent took place in Old World contexts. This broader view allows for a more comprehensive approach to the study of the African Diaspora. The volume provides an overview of African Diaspora studies and features as a major concern a rigorous interrogation of “identity”. Other primary themes include contribution to western civilization, from religion, music, and sports to agricultural production and medicine.

*Kristin Mann*<sup>25</sup> writes about one of the most heavily traveled migration route from Old World to new be the trajectory of slave ships that left the coast of West Africa along the Bight of Benin and landed their human cargo in Brazil. An estimated two million persons over the course of some 250 years were forced migrants along this route, arriving mainly in the Brazilian province of Bahia. Earlier generations of scholars studied this southern portion of the slave trade simply as an east-west movement of enslaved persons stripped of identity and culture, or they looked for possible "retentions" of Africa among descendants of slaves in the Americas. As a result of new research, we can now paint a more complex picture of peoples and cultures in the south Atlantic, from the earliest period of the slave trade up to the present. The nine papers in this volume indicate that a dynamic and continuous movement of peoples east as well as west across the Atlantic forged diverse and vibrant re-inventions and re-interpretations of the rich mix of cultures represented by Africans and peoples of African descent on both continents. Although much has been written about the African Diaspora in the Atlantic Ocean, the Diaspora in the Indian Ocean is virtually unrecognized. Concerned with Africans, who lived south of the Sahara and were dispersed by free will or forcefully to the non-African lands in The Indian Ocean region, this book deals with a topic that has long been overlooked.

*Shihan De S. Jayasuriya*<sup>26</sup> and *Richard Pankhurst*<sup>27</sup> edited book<sup>28</sup> is a collection of scholarly

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<sup>25</sup> Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (New York: Frank Cass, 2001).

<sup>26</sup>Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya is a research associate at King’s College London in the University of London, and a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. She is a coordinator of TADIA (The African Diaspora in Asia), a project associated with UNESCO. She and Richard Pankhurst are the authors of *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean* (2003).

<sup>27</sup>Richard Pankhurst was born in 1927 in London, England, in a progressive, left-wing family. His mother, E. Sylvia Pankhurst was a renowned Ethiopian activist, feminist and outspoken anti-fascist. His grandfather, Richard Pankhurst, was a liberal lawyer who was known as the "Red Doctor". After Pankhurst received his Ph.D. in Economic History in 1956, he began to teach at the University College of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 1962, Dr. Pankhurst founded the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at the University of Addis Ababa. He was the first director of the institute from 1962 - 1972. In 1976, following the Ethiopian revolution, Dr. Pankhurst left Ethiopia and returned to England. In the next ten years he worked as a librarian at the Royal Asiatic Society. In 1986, Dr. Pankhurst moved back to Ethiopia, where he is now conducting research again at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. Dr. Pankhurst has co-authored 22 books and has either edited or compiled 17 books on Ethiopia. In addition, he has written more than 400 scholarly articles about Ethiopian history, culture, and tradition that appeared in numerous academic journals, magazines and newspapers throughout the world.

work. Eight scholars, researching the African Diaspora in distinct geographical locations in the Indian Ocean region and with expertise in the areas of Anthropology, Linguistics, International relations, Politics and Sociology, have contributed papers to this book. *Edward A. Alpers* compares the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean with that of the Atlantic Ocean. *Eduardo Medeiros* surveys the Mozambican Diaspora in the Indian Ocean Islands (Madagascar, Seychelles, the Mascarenhas, Mauritius and Reunion) and the cultural identities that they developed. *Malyn Newitt's* paper on African migration to Madagascar focuses on the African contribution to contemporary Malagasy culture. *Helen Hintjens* demonstrates the African Diaspora in reunion and focuses on the transformation of the Diaspora into French citizens. *Jean Houbert* surveys the colonization-decolonization of the Indian Ocean Islands of Mauritius, Reunion, Rodrigues, Seychelles and Chagos. *Richard Pankhurst* surveys the African Diaspora in India from Medieval times to the end of the 18th century. *Helene Basu* focuses on the Diaspora from the global and political elite context and delineates local constructions of Siddi identity in Gujarat (Western India) that is embedded in a cult of African saints. Finally, *Shihan de S. Jayasuriya* surveys the African Diaspora in Sri Lanka and examines the largest community of African descendants in Sri Lanka whose presence is signaled through dance and Music.

A wide-ranging collection by *Verene A. Shepherd*<sup>29</sup> deals with the Caribbean and Atlantic world slavery, history and historiography, human and physical geography, archeology and cultural studies. His work inspired by the work of Barry Higman. The contributors use a variety of sources and methodologies to deal with topics which intersect with Higman's overall work and research interests. These topics include Caribbean archeology; urban townscape and landscape; slavery and technology; slave demography; the varied contexts of slave and free labor; gender agriculture regimes on non-sugar properties, resistance; the slave trade, compensation and manumission; adjustments to emancipation and contemporary Caribbean society.

In perceptive and arresting analysis, *Robin Cohen*<sup>30</sup> illuminates the changing meanings of Diaspora and the contemporary diasporic condition. This volume serves to introduce a major new series, Global Diasporas. For the Greeks, from whose language the word originated, Diaspora meant

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<sup>28</sup> *Shihan de S. Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst (eds), The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean (Eritrea: Africa World press, 2003).*

<sup>29</sup> Verene A. Shepherd (ed.), *Working slavery, pricing Freedom: Perspectives from the Caribbean, Africa and the African* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

the dispersal of population through colonization. For Jews, Africans, Armenians, and others, the word acquired a more sinister and brutal meaning. Diaspora meant a collective trauma, banishment into exile, and heart-aching longing to return home. During the early modern period, trade and labour Diasporas gridded the mercantilist and early capitalist worlds. Today the term has changed again, often implying positive and ongoing relationship between migrants' homelands and their places of work and settlement. Robin recognizes the difficulty in coming to terms with, "Diaspora", and as such it introduces conceptual categories to display the variety of meanings the word invokes. The author sees a common element in all forms of Diaspora; these are people who live outside their "natal (or imagined natal) territories" and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religions they adopt, and the cultures they produce. Beginning with the Jewish experience as the original Diaspora, the book argues that while it is important to take this into consideration, it is also important to go beyond it. As such Diaspora is broken down into various forms. Victim Diasporas, Labour Diasporas, Imperia Diasporas, Trade Diasporas, Homeland Diasporas, Cultural Diasporas.

*Roland Oliver*<sup>31</sup> and *Anthony Atmore's*<sup>32</sup> first survey of nineteenth-and twentieth-century Africa appeared in 1967. It is attributable to the fact that this is very much a narrative of political events, which as readers of this journal are aware, have not been the cutting edge of historical revisionism in recent decades. Oliver and Atmore give scarcely a nod to issues of class and gender, to women's history and peasant studies, still less to Cultural Studies, Afrocentrism, and Deconstructionist. Not surprisingly, the modest bibliography lists more works published in the 1960s than in the 1980s. The book's strengths remain a clear and judiciously compressed narrative set in a broad historical context and illustrated by outstanding maps.

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<sup>31</sup>Roland Oliver is Emeritus Professor of African history at the University of London. Following his undergraduate and doctoral studies at the University of Cambridge between 1941 and 1948, Roland Oliver joined the staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies, SOAS at the University of London, where he was successively Lecturer, Reader and Professor until his retirement in 1986. In 1963, he carried out a survey of 250 working Africanist academics in the United Kingdom and founded the African Studies Association itself. In 1989 Professor Oliver was awarded the Distinguished Africanist Award of the American African Studies Association and in 1993 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He was a founding editor, with John Fage, in 1960 of the *Journal of African History* and, again with John Fage, in 1960 of the *Cambridge History of Africa* which appeared in eight volumes between 1975 and 1986. *The Cambridge History of Africa*, and his influential *Oxford History of East Africa*, were produced in a decade between the late 1970s and late 1980s. These histories recognised and celebrated the long, rich history of Africa, which for the first half of the 20th Century was previously thought by historians to have only a history "created" by white travellers, administrators and settlers.

<sup>32</sup> Roland Oliver and Anthony Atmore, *Africa since 1800* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University press, 1967).

*Basil Davidson*<sup>33</sup> is one of the founders of the academic discipline

of African history. The glories of ancient African civilization, the horrors of the slave trade, the exploitative qualities of colonial rule, the role of racism as an ideology of oppression, and the long struggle for liberation are some of the areas of his work.<sup>34</sup>

*Philip Curtin's*<sup>35</sup> seminal work<sup>36</sup> on the African slave trade helped to usher in a quarter-century of stimulating scholarship of African history and its relationship to events elsewhere in the world. The African Slave Trade set new standards for research on the origins and destinations of slaves from Africa to the Western Hemisphere and on the evolution of the trade over time and across space. Though Curtin's specific numbers and conclusions have been debated, enough confidence in the quantitative dimensions of the trade was established to inspire further thought on the consequences of these flows for demographic, social, and economic developments in Africa, Europe, and the New World. Small industries have also emerged to study the health and mortality of slaves from capture in Africa through seasoning at places of destination, the process of abolishing the slave trade, and the legacies of the trade for health, race relations, and culture.

With general interest growing in African history, *Joseph E. Inikori* and *Stanley L. Engerman*<sup>37</sup> arranged a conference in 1988 to bring forth new essays on the slave trade and its effects. Though previously published in various issues of *Social Science History*, this collection facilitates a coherent overview of the latest work to the field and makes the thirteen essays conveniently available for classroom use. This book is useful and informative for scholars interested in African history, slavery in the Western Hemisphere, and the history of the Atlantic economy.

Reflecting on hegemony in Africa and India, *Raychaudhuri* reminds us that consent did not

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<sup>33</sup>Basil Davidson (born in Bristol, England) is an acclaimed British historian, writer and Africanist. Before the Carnation Revolution, he was a particular expert in Portuguese Africa. He has written several books and movies on the current plight of Africa. Colonialism and the rise of African emancipation movements have been central preoccupations of his work. He is an Honorary Fellow of the London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

<sup>34</sup>Basil Davidson, *The African Slave trade* (London: James Currey publishers, 1961).

<sup>35</sup>Philip D. Curtin is a Professor Emeritus at Johns Hopkins University and historian on Africa and the Atlantic slave trade. He has published an estimate that from the 1500s to 1870, around 9,566,000 African slaves were imported to the Americas. (This figure, however, is disputed by Joseph E. Inikori, who argues for the higher estimate of around 15,000,000). A MacArthur Fellow, Curtin has published a total of 19 books, which include *Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century*, described by the *American Historical Review* (AHR) as "ground-breaking." In addition to the aforementioned calculation, he has challenged the commonly-held view that advances in medicine were responsible for increased attempts at European colonization of Africa in the 1800s.

<sup>36</sup>Philip Curtin, *The world and the west: The European Challenge and the overseas Response in the Age of Empire* (U.K: Cambridge University press, 2000).

<sup>37</sup>*Joseph E. Inikori and Stanley L. Engerman (eds)*, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe* (Durham: Duke University press, 1992).

always constitute an instance of hegemony. For example, education and public health brought advantages to the elite, and although these induced consent, their inadequacies proved counterproductive. In short, acquiescence was never unqualified. Indeed, the construction of hegemony and domination, he concludes, was a process in which the ruler had limited control. The title of the book gives the impression that it covers the whole of Africa and India. This is not the case. The chapters are also of varying quality. At the same time, there are differences of emphasis, and consensus eludes the authors. For example, some authors consider Gramsci's concept of hegemony to be an inappropriate analytical tool as far as Africa and India are concerned, others are ambivalent.

*Richard Pankhurst* has discussed History of the Ethiopian Diaspora, in India. In the whole series<sup>38</sup> he focused on different aspects of Ethiopians Diaspora taking place in India. In the very first series he discussed the aspect of *Ethiopians in India in Ancient and Early medieval times*. In this he has written about historic Diaspora in India. This work shows that the Aksumite port of Adulis, on the Red sea coast of Africa, traced extensively with various parts of western India, which supplied Ethiopia with both textiles and spices.

The second series is on, *Ethiopians in India: their power Increases*. The focus is on Habshis who were banished from Bengal. Ahmad unlike the rulers of Bengal, did not however, banish the Habsihs, who therefore continued to be both prominent and powerful. During the subsequent reign of Ala-ud-Din Ahmad (1436-1458) they stood for example on the left of the throne. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the local Bahmani ruler, Sultan Firuz (1397-1422), has many Habshi slaves as his personal attendants, as well as in his bodyguard and harem. *The Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* concludes "though most Habshis came to India as slaves their faithfulness, courage and energy often raised them to position of high truth in the Bahmani court".

The third aspect is on *the rise of Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim, or Ahmad Gagn, and its Aftermath*. In this issue he discussed about the changing balance of power. In the date fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the advent of fire arms in the Red sea and gulf or Aden Region led to major changes in the balance of power in the Horn of Africa.

In fourth series he discussed about, *Great Habshis in Ethiopian/Indian History*. Many Ethiopians, or "Abyssinians", were taken to India in medieval and post medieval times. The title

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<sup>38</sup>Richard Pankhurst has written article in six parts in the *Addis Tribune* (Ethiopia, 31st March to 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2000).

'Ulugh khan' was given to them who rose to positions of power and influence.

In the fifth issue he wrote about *Habshis in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century India*. In this issue he continues to examine "Ethiopians" or "Abyssinians" presence in India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The best known Habshi of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century was probably Malik Ambar (1549-1626), an "Abyssian" slave purchased in Baghdad, who became chief minister in the shrunken kingdom of Ahmadnagar.

In the last issue he concluded the *Ethio-Indian Habshi story*. The Habshi admirals of the Mughal Empire enjoyed an influence for beyond Janjira. Half a century or so later, in 1733, the British concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the Siddis. The death of the Siddi leader Yagu in the following year was followed, however, by a dispute over the succession. This weakened afterwards the power of the Siddis, after which the Peshwa seized many of their forts. The power of the Siddis was by then fast declining. Their ships as the Bombay Gazetteer notes proved "no match for the Maratha fleet" and were therefore unable to protect the shipping of Surat.

*Omar Khalidi's*<sup>39</sup> article lists additional literature on the African presence in the zone from Arabia to the Indian sub-continent. The citations include two bibliographies by Omar Khalidi himself. These are *Deccan under the Sultans, 1296-1724: A Bibliography of Monographic and Periodical Literature* (1987); and *Hyderabad State under the Nizams, 1724-1948: A Bibliography of Monographic and Periodical Literature* (1985).

*Fitzroy A. Baptiste*<sup>40</sup> examines African descended communities in contemporary India. He focuses on several points like; the African presence in prehistoric India and Asia, Diaspora of Africans, Siddis and Habshis; the Africans in India, Slave Trade, current distribution of Siddis, the career of Malik Ambar.

He has reviewed the books relevant to the African Diaspora in India in the chapter 'African presence in India'. He has estimated the African Slave-trade-Diaspora up to 1600 A.D. and presented comparative statistics for the Trans-Atlantic slave trade to the Americas. He analyzed the career of Malik Ambar, in the history of India and of the African Diaspora there and in Asia. Baptiste believes that, Malik Ambar's significance can be assessed under two headings. In the history of the Indian sub-continent, his resistance of over 20 years till his death in 1630 checked the Mughal expansion into the Deccan and to the south of India. It also prevented Mughal control of the vital coastline at places such

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<sup>39</sup> Omar Khalidi, "African Diaspora in India: The Case of the Habashis of Hyderabad" *Islamic Culture* (A journal of the University of Hyderabad) 63, no. 1 and 2 (1989): pp. 85-107.

<sup>40</sup> Fitzroy A. Baptiste, "African Presence in India" *Africa Quarterly* vol. 38, no. 1 and 2 (1998): pp.91-124.



as Janjira Island. Accordingly, he and his shifting coalition of Deccan entities, aided at times by the Portuguese and the British, happened to bring about the demise of the Mughals and the ultimate the ascendancy of the British Raj in India.

In the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies an important symposium was held on "*The Long-Distance Trade in Slaves across the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in the Nineteenth Century*". Participants included Western scholars in the forefront of studies on the trans-Saharan slave-trade-Diaspora to the circum-Mediterranean in the medieval and modern periods and on the trans-Atlantic slave-trade-Diaspora to the Americas from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: in particular *Ralph Austen*<sup>41</sup> and *Paul Lovejoy*<sup>42</sup>. The only continental Indian academic at the Sweden forum was Father Charles Borges of the Jesuit Xavier Centre of Historical Research in Goa, India.

*K. Mathews*<sup>43</sup> attempts to understand and analyse the role of dynamics of the development of the Indian Diaspora in East Africa and South Africa. An attempt is made to identify the core elements with special emphasis on how Indian Diaspora culture has influenced economic development and vice-versa. This study also includes a projection of likely trajectory of future development, emerging issues, challenges and prospects for Indian Diaspora.

*Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi*<sup>44</sup> has worked on African settlement in India. His works are based on Linguistic evidence of Bantu Origins of the Siddis of India. He found that the Siddis of India are fragmented communities of mostly East African ancestry. They speak half a dozen different Indic languages, Gujarati dialects, or a mixture of Gujarati and Hindi, Sindhi and its Dialect Cutchi, Urdu, Dakhini, Marathi, Malayalam, Konkani and kannada, with some Bantu/Swahili words and phrases. He further deepens his findings by saying that the speech of the Siddis appears to have been derived from languages spoken in mainland Tanzania. In recent years, Siddi cultural societies have been participating internationally with their Muslim Sufi song and dance and their renewed contacts with east Africa have increased slightly the number of Bantu words in their language use, such as Swahili greetings, emphasizing their East African heritage and misconceiving Swahili as their ancestral language.

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<sup>41</sup>Ralph A. Austen is Professor Emeritus of African History in The University of Chicago, Department of History. His current research focuses on the political economy and cultural dimensions of European overseas expansion (including autobiographical writings by "colonial subjects") and African literature.

<sup>42</sup>Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A history of slavery in Africa* (U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> K. Mathews, "Indian Diaspora in East and South Africa" *Indian Horizons*, Oct.-Dec. 2000.

<sup>44</sup> Lodhi, Abdulaziz Y. "African Settlements in India" *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 1, no.1 (1992): pp.83-86.

*Anirudha Gupta's*<sup>45</sup> edited book is a collection of essays which in the editor's own words attempts to present 'historical profiles of some minorities on the coast'. He started with the policy of Delhi sultanate, Mughal Empire and Europeans towards coastal region. In his book three articles deal specifically with minority groups associated with the coast- parsis with their base in Bombay, the Christian missionaries of South kanara and finally the dispersed 'African' settlements along the Kathiawad littoral. *Jayanti Patel's* attempted study of African settlements in Gujarat. The focus is primarily on the Siddi settlement of Jambur, and author draws almost entirely on census evidence. The remaining two essay deals with mercantile system operating along the coast-the Malabar and the Gujarat stretch-in historical times. Anirudha Gupta's study on Daman, using oral evidence, shows greater awareness of the settlement's historical antecedents.

As noted above a few Indian authors have written about this African dimension of history from an Indian perspective. Indeed, the African diasporic perspective deserves more thorough application in order to present a more complete reconstruction of the national and global relationships.

We know a great deal about Diaspora in the western experience, but only a few studies have been published about this subject for Asia and especially for India, this therefore remains a fertile field for research. Another aspect in great need of study is the contributions they made to the diasporic land and to their homeland. Not nearly enough has been written about either of these. Music and dance innovations have received some credit, but there is still need to look into issues such as food and eating habits, dress, language, work, and contribution in agriculture and the crafts. And to what extent did descendants of Africans in India contribute to the economic and social development of the country.

To varying degrees, an African identity has been sustained in the Western India, and neighboring areas and it 'expresses' itself in contemporary history and culture. Indeed, the fact is that Africans and their descendants preserved their legacy and cohesiveness. These characteristics provide guidelines for the reconstruction and analysis of the continuing dispersion and sustained global influence of Africans and their descendants abroad. Finally, because so little work has been done on the Diaspora in India, and as interest in the subject is growing it is a great opportunity to work on the topic and develop the field and thus increase the understanding of the subject.

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<sup>45</sup>Anirudha Gupta (ed.), *Minorities on India's West Coast: History and Society* (Delhi: Kalinga Publication, 1991).