Conclusion
In this work I have tried to explore certain issues pertaining to the Indian labour Diaspora, which was created by the emigration of Indian labourers under the indenture system to work on the sugar plantations, by situating it within the historical experience in Mauritius, which was the first plantation settlement to receive indentured emigrants from India. The rubrics of Diaspora studies are multifarious and include a wide range of complex issues – processes of diasporic formation, socio-cultural persistence and hybridity within the diasporic communities, identity, relationships between the Diaspora and homeland, responses from the host societies, issue of space and recognition, etc. The focus of this work is on the formation of the Diaspora and its foray into the social, economic and political space of the adopted land because in my view these issues are very crucial in shaping the destinies of the Diaspora and make the diasporic experiences distinct. Related to these two thematic issues, the questions I have attempted to address in this work are – how the process of dislocation of the labouring community was coordinated and what was the role of the state and its political ideology in the process; what were the factors for the migration of Indian labourers which led to the formation of Indian labour Diaspora in Mauritius; who were people who constituted this diasporic community; what were their experiences in the adopted land; and finally how this diasporic community did an image makeover from victims to achievers.

Indentured emigration was carried out through a well structured and carefully administered system in which every aspect of the emigration process was regulated through various legislative measures and the administrative machinery. It involved the
governments at three places – first, at the site of recruitment (India), second at the destination (Mauritius) and third, the British government. In principle the Indian government was supposed to protect the interests of the Indian emigrants, Mauritian government the planters’ interest and the Imperial government in London was to ensure the smooth functioning of the system by removing the abuses and acting as a moderator to avoid any possible clash between the first two governments. At the level of promulgation, these governments followed this expected course and they all made attempts to remove the abuses. However, despite all the efforts, abuses associated with indenture system like kidnapping, ill treatment on estates, and exploitation of labourers etc. continued to occur throughout. There was no strong administrative will to implement the regulations which left the regulations practically without teeth. Despite a general dissatisfaction among the administrative circles in India as well as Britain, there was no effort to stop the process because this was facilitating the larger needs of the Empire.

The regulatory measures – acts, ordinances, and even the title of officials such as Protector of Immigrants – were articulated in a language which was aimed at hiding the real motives of the system and creating an image of the British Empire as a paternalistic benevolent state and was part of a larger project of establishing colonial hegemony and justifying colonial domination. Whenever the indenture system was attacked for the abuses associated with it, the essential imperial defence for the continuation of the system was by asserting its benefits for the people and claiming it to be the only way out for the already distressed Indian population who had no other means of survival. Conversely, as I have tried to trace in this work, at the heart of the indenture system existed the crude exemplification of imperial racist ideology. In colonial prose, Indian labourers were referred to by racially pejorative terms like
'coolies' and these 'filthy Indian labourers', their 'insanitary habits' and 'habitual idleness' were held responsible for all the wrongs in the system - whether it was the high mortality of emigrants during their transportation or the out break of epidemics which claimed lives of innumerable immigrants or any disorder on the plantation estates.

A related issue which I have tried to explore is the popular response to this imperialist project and the opposition by the Indian nationalists as part of their counter hegemonic struggle against the colonial rule. From the very beginning, the Indian nationalists were clear in their understanding that the emigration of Indians under the indenture system was primarily based on the principles of economic exploitation of the labourers in favour of the interests of the planters and the colonial powers and therefore it had virtually no scope for improvement and redressal of the grievances of the Indians. Therefore, they developed a sharp critique of the system itself, equated it with slavery and demanded a complete abolition of the indenture system. Another core element of the Indian nationalists' response was the linking of the discrimination against Indian labour Diaspora with the Indian nationalists' anti-imperialist articulation.

This work has tried to find the explanations for emigration beyond the binary model of push/pull and argues that that none of these push or pull factors work in a stand alone mode and nothing is easier than to draw up a list of certain factors labelled as push or pull. The real problem, as Samir Amin puts it, is that of overall strategy because it is there that the ultimate cause of migration lies. I have proposed to shift the focus from counting the push – pull factors towards the contexts and motives of indentured emigration which were different from the internal migration and identified the factors for indentured migration in terms of the needs of colonial plantation
Conclusion

economy and the processes of imperial expansion. A careful observation of the recruitment operations, transportation arrangements, distribution of emigrants, etc, establish beyond doubt that a very well structured emigration system was evolved by the colonial authorities in which labour, a crucial factor of production, was mobilised by intense labour mobilisation strategies, and relocated in specific destinations as per the requirements of the commercial expansion of these locations as well as the needs of the capitalist development of the colonial powers.

I have tried to make a shift from the usual monolithic portrayals of the Indian indentured Diaspora either as victims, who were exploited at every stage, lost everything in the process – sense of belonging, socio-cultural values – and who always mourn in the diasporic setting; or alternatively, as makers of their own worlds as per their desires. Using either of these imageries to describe the indentured diasporic experiences in alternative mode would be historically inappropriate in the case of Indian labour diaspora in Mauritius. I have suggested instead that it should be explored in a transitional fashion – instead of two contrasting imageries, a transition from coolie as a victim to coolie as an achiever. I have studied their foray into acquiring prominent positions in socio-economic and political space in the diasporic setting not by undermining their exploitation and incessant sufferings and struggles but by putting an equal emphasis on their miserable predicament. This work elucidates this process of transition by making an excursion through three spells of the lives of Indian labour Diaspora in Mauritius: first, a study of the repressive plantation regime in which immigrant labourers were subjected to relentless exploitation, were not paid adequately, and strict restrictions on their mobility were imposed by the plantation lobby. Second, labourers’ protests against this repressive regime which reiterate the fact that they were not submissive creatures in the imperial scheme of
expansion but these immigrants tried every possible avenue to articulate their resentment. The third stage is marked by the process of transformation of Indian diasporic community in Mauritius as a result of their intrinsic desire and efforts to move out of the confines of the plantations which they tried to accomplish by making relentless efforts to acquire property, education and political rights.

In this work I have attempted to address certain issues which may appear to some to be rather old fashioned and the current genre of Diaspora studies may find it 'distracting and fruitless', yet I have engaged with them because they are imperative for the study of the Indian labour Diaspora from a historical vantage point.