CHAPTER V

INDIAN MINORITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BURMA
Southeast Asia being a proximate area to India and rich in natural resources was a region of earliest migration of Indians. The importance of Southeast Asia was evident from the fact that, out of the twelve million people of Indian descent who are abroad, over two million live in this area. Among the countries of Southeast Asia it was in Burma, Malaya and Singapore that there were highest number of Indians. The presence of a large number of Indians in Southeast Asia formed an important aspect of India's relations with Southeast Asia and hence the study of Indians overseas is vital. This chapter is a "bird's eye view" of Indians in Southeast Asia with special emphasis on Indians in Burma as the problem of Indians there was a 'thorn in the flesh' of India-Burma relations during this period.

**EARLY IMMIGRATION OF THE INDIANS: ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES:**

Indian immigration had begun in the first century of the Christian era but it was only after the Europeans came to Southeast Asia that largescale immigration of Indians took place.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, under the protective umbrella of the British, a large number of Indian immigrants, mostly labourers, merchants and money-lenders went to Burma and Malaya and to a lesser extent to Thailand, Indo-China and the East Indies. As the indigenous people were engaged in their own trade, the British government turned to India for cheap labour. From the 1930's, number of Indian teachers, doctors, technicians and white-collar workers also migrated to Southeast Asia. In Burma and Malaya, the Indian labour and enterprise played a significant role in the development of their economies. During the second world war, there was political awareness among the Indians and thousands rallied to the call of the Indian National Army. Representatives of Indian organisations abroad regularly attended the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress.2

India's interest in its nationals living in Southeast Asia were slight in the pre-war days, except in times of crisis such as the anti-Indian riots of 1938 in Burma and the plight of Malayan Indians during the world depression of the early 1930's. Occasionally the Indian National Congress expressed

concern for them, as in the following resolution passed at its annual session in 1936:

The Congress sends greetings to our fellow countrymen overseas and its assurances of sympathy and help in their status in the territories in which they have settled. The Congress is ready and willing to take all action within its power to ameliorate their condition, but desires to point out that a radical amelioration in their status must ultimately depend on the attainment by India of Independence and the power to protect her nationals abroad. 3

In 1937 Nehru made an unofficial visit to Burma and Malaya. He advised the Indians to "live in cooperation with the Burmese", for their future was tied up with that of the latter. 4 Even during his visit to Malaya Nehru emphasised the point that the Indians should live in harmony with the Malays as well as the Chinese and consider Malaya as their home. Nehru stressed that only when India became free she could take some positive steps to help Indians overseas. Pandit Nehru said, "when India becomes free, her hands will be long and powerful to protect each and everyone of her children abroad". 5

5. V. Suryanarayan, "Indians in Malaysia - The Neglected Minority" in Singh, n. 1, p. 34
The enthusiasm shown by Southeast Asian government to cultivate good political relations with India was in marked contrast to the distaste or indifference they felt towards the domiciled Indian Communities. This became evident after the Southeast Asian countries became independent as in the case of Burma, wherein they strongly felt that they were being economically dominated by the Indian immigrants. The fact that the Chettiyar Community, who were the money-lenders, exploited the indigenous people, cannot be overlooked. This created problems in India-Burma relations. On the whole, comparatively speaking, the position of Indians was better off than the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

The rise of an independent India and the personal leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru had a definite influence on the Indian minorities in Southeast Asia. New Delhi opposed the concept of dual citizenship, and took the position that Indians residing abroad should either keep their Indian citizenship and have the status of foreigners or become citizens of the country where they live. In the case of the former, India would secure the same treatment as that of the most favoured aliens; in the event of the latter India believed that the foreign Governments involved would accord full rights of citizenship.

6. Thompson and Adloff, n. 3, p. 63
The majority of the people of Indian descent were nationals of the countries in which they were settled, and were not, therefore, the concern of the Government of India. Nehru's statement in the Lok Sabha in 1957 that Indians overseas must be allowed to live with self respect and dignity applied to all people and could be ignored at the peril of bedeviling bilateral relations.  

INDIANS IN INDO-CHINA:

Indo-China which comprised of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia had a small Indian population. Most of them were settled in Vietnam and to a lesser extent in Cambodia and numbered about 6000. It was after the French occupation of these regions that Indian immigration to Vietnam and Cambodia increased and most of them were from the French colonies in India so they were identified with the French conquerors. As they were French citizens they had easy access to Government jobs than the Vietnamese and were mostly employed as clerks, postmen, policemen, registrars and the like. South Indian Chettiyars were money-lenders whose tactics made them very unpopular; the north Indians, shopkeeping; and almost all the Parsees were engaged in trade. After the war broke out in Vietnam, many Indians left these states.  

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8. Singh, n. 1, p. 3  
9. Thompson and Adloff, n. 3, pp. 129, 131
INDIANS IN INDONESIA:

Immigration to Indonesia was not on a large scale. The Indian settlers were brought there by the British as miners and labourers. They numbered about 35,000. The Indians who went to Indonesia were from Sindh, Punjab and the South and were mostly settled in Java and Sumatra. Many of them in Sumatra were doing petty jobs and were daily wage-earners while a few in Sumatra and Java had taken to business in textiles, sports goods, etc. By and large the Indians were retail merchants, shopkeepers and skilled workers. The Indians in Indonesia abstained from politics.10

Independent Indonesia restricted immigration. Immigrants were limited to 8,000 and formalities became complicated. It was officially announced in April 1963 that the "open door" policy of the Dutch era was given up. As regards Indians, doctors were the only group whose immigration was encouraged.11

10. Singh, n. 1, pp. 15, 120
11. Thompson and Adloff, n. 3, pp. 122-3
INDIANS IN MALAYA/MALAYSIA:

When the British founded their settlement at Penang in 1786, they brought with them Indian sepoys and Indian labourers were employed in the construction of public works and harbour facilities. With the growth of the rubber industry in 1905 Indians were recruited by the Europeans for plantation labour. Likewise Indians were sought for the construction of railways and roads. 12

An Indian Immigration Fund was established in 1907 by the governments of the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements to give free passage and accommodation to Indian workers. Indian agents, known as kangabies, were sent to India to recruit labourers. 13 The treatment of Indian labourers was not satisfactory and hence the Government of India placed a complete ban on labour emigration with effect from 15 June 1938. 14

13. Ibid.
In addition to the South Indian labour there was a white-collar class employed in clerical work, in shopkeeping and in the professions. The Chettiyar bankers were an important element in the credit system of Malaya. The smaller number of north Indians included Sikhs, whose traditional occupation was as night-watchman with money-lending as a side-line, Bengali traders, Punjabi cattle drovers, etc. 15

The Indian Government's view that India had no stake in that country and that it would be in the interests of Malaya that they should take roots in the soil was accepted by the Malayan Government. In implementing that policy they proceeded with a pilot scheme of settlement of Indian labour on land in the different states of Malaya. It had been decided that the Indian Immigration Fund would be utilised only for the improvement of amenities to Indian labour. A portion of this fund might be utilised for developing lands allotted to labourers. 16

The education of Indians was closely linked with the rubber estates. Estate owners who employed Indians had to provide for schools if more than ten school-age children, between the ages of seven and fourteen, were on the estate.

16. The Hindu, 24 March 1954
The standards of these schools were very poor because of poorly trained teachers. Government grants-in-aid paid the teachers' salaries and there were also government operated schools for the children of Indian labourers employed by the government. 17

Two important issues which were the concern of government of India were education of Indians in Malaya and citizenship rules. In 1952 the Indian Government agreed to Malayan Government's suggestion for the recruitment of teachers from India to teach in Indian schools in Malaya. 18 It was planned to open a Department of Indian studies in the University of Malaya for which a token grant of Rs.6,000 was announced by R.K. Tandon, Commissioner for India in Malaya. 19 The Government of India further helped the Indian students to receive University education by constituting a scholarship fund. To begin with it was proposed to award 5 University scholarship of the value of M $ 1,500 each per annum and 25 pre-university scholarship of M $ 90 each per annum. A Trust was being created with the Indian representative in Malaya as the Trustee. He would be assisted in the task of selection of candidates by a committee. 20

17. Means, n. 12, pp. 37-38
19. The Hindu, 21 February 1955
20. See (1) India, Lok Sabha Debates, pt. 1, vols. 3 & 4, 14 August 1953, col. 671 and (2) The Hindu, 22 March 1954
The Federation of Malaya was established in 1948. The Malays automatically became Federal citizens. As far as non-Malays were concerned those born in a Malay State could become Federal citizens only if they were born as British subjects, and if they had the further qualification that their fathers were also born in a State or were Federal citizens themselves. Citizenship by application would be acquired by any person who would fulfil a number of stringent conditions, including birth or long continuous residence in the Federation and a reasonably good knowledge of the Malay or English language.  \(^{21}\)

There were protests from the non-Malay communities against the citizenship provisions. During 1952, the Federation Agreement was amended in order to liberalise qualifications for citizenship. Two Indians were included in the select committee appointed to examine the question of citizenship. The Malayan Federation Citizenship Act which came into force on 15 September 1952 extended citizenship to any one born in a federal territory, if one of his parents were born there and any citizen of the U.K. and Colonies on application.  \(^{22}\)

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There was no radical change in the citizenship provisions when Malaya became independent on 31 August 1957. The new Constitution conferred citizenship by law upon all those who were citizens of the Federation before Merdeka Day, and upon all those who were born in the Federation on or after Merdeka Day.\textsuperscript{23} For citizenship by registration, the residential qualification was five out of the preceding seven years and elementary knowledge of Malay language. For citizenship by naturalisation, the qualification was that the person must have resided for eight out of the preceding twelve years and have an adequate knowledge of the Malay language. The government, however, waived the requirement that an applicant should know the Malay language for a period of one year after independence.\textsuperscript{24}

The Citizenship Act was amended in 1962 to adequately safeguard the citizenship of the Federation from being exploited by those who wished for no legal ties with the Federation. A person born in the Federation would no longer become a federal citizen automatically if neither of his parents were a citizen of, nor a permanent resident in the Federation. A minor would be deprived of his citizenship if

\textsuperscript{23} Simandjuntak, n. 21, p. 184

\textsuperscript{24} Suryanarayan, n. 5, pp. 43-44
his father renounced his own citizenship or had been deprived of it. A woman married to a Federal citizen could apply for citizenship only after having resided continuously for at least two years, citizenship by registration was scrapped and a non-Malay who was born in the Federation before Merdeka Day had to apply for citizenship under the stiffer naturalisation laws.\textsuperscript{25}

The formation of Malaysia was welcomed by the Indian communities because Malaysia would assure them political stability, racial balance and economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{26}

**INDIANS IN SINGAPORE:**

Among the Indians in Singapore about 65 per cent were Tamils and the rest were Malayalis, Punjabis, Sikhs, Bengalis, Gujaratis, Sindhis, Telugus and Pathans. The immigrants from North India were mainly engaged in business of textiles and spices. Tamils were mainly in municipal and port services. Some were clerks in government offices, small shop-keepers and the professional elite. Many Indians were employed in civil services, labour unions, journalism, law and medical professions.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Simandjuntak, n. 21, pp. 184-5

\textsuperscript{26} The Hindu, 17 October 1962

\textsuperscript{27} S.R. Sudhamani, "Indians in Southeast Asia: An Approach Paper" in Singh, n. 1, pp. 11-12
In 1957 Singapore's Chief Minister, Lim Yew Hock, announced in the Legislative Assembly that Indians would be eligible to Singapore citizenship in the same way as citizens of the United Kingdom and the Colonies. An Indian living in Singapore for two years would become a Singapore citizen. After the People's Action Party came to power, Commonwealth citizens got no concession and so Indians had to be in Singapore for eight years to acquire citizenship.

The Indian community in Singapore supported the Malaysia proposals by voting for the alternative "A" which endorsed the "White Paper" agreement reached between Singapore Premier, Lee Kuan Yew and Tunku Abdul Rahman. Those proposals included autonomy in education and labour for Singapore, continuation of Singapore citizenship which for external purposes would be equal to Malayan citizenship. Tamil would continue as one of the four official languages.

28. The Hindu, 6 December 1957
29. Ibid., 17 October 1962
30. Ibid.
INDIANS IN PHILIPPINES:

In Philippines there were about 4000 Indians, mostly Tamils from Madras, who had gone there along with the British in 1762. It was in 1940s that Punjabis and Sindhis went to Philippines. They were small traders and money-lenders.31

The Philippines Government lifted its one-year-old ban on the entry quota of Indian immigrants into the country in March 1963 as a measure of goodwill to India.32

INDIANS IN THAILAND:

Of the 18,000 Indians (in 1961) settled in Thailand about half reside in Bangkok. Most of the Indians were originally from Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. The first group arrived in Thailand before the first world war. They were mostly workers and labourers and still continued to work as watchmen, milkmen and petty shop-keepers. Merchants and traders came later. Most Indian immigrants to Thailand retained their Indian nationality. In spite of retaining their nationality they have suffered no discrimination at the hands of the Thais. As citizens they enjoy equal rights.33

31. Sudhamani, n. 27, pp. 18-19
32. The Hindu, 1 March 1963
33. Times of India, 19 November 1961
INDIANS IN BURMA:

Burma being the closest neighbour of India in Southeast Asia had developed cultural and commercial relations from ancient times and there were many Indians engaged in trade. It was with the three Anglo-Burman Wars of 1824-1826, 1852 and 1885-1886 that Burma was made part of India and from 1852 that Indian immigration increased on a large scale. Once Burma became part of India for political and administrative purposes many Indians went to Burma as employees of East India Company and others as labourers. It was on a contract basis and therefore while some returned, many others stayed on in Burma. The British appointed Indians as most of the Burmese were already engaged in their own business and in India manpower and cheap labour were available. For the Indians, on the other hand, wages and working conditions in Burma were better. The influx of Indians into Burma during British rule were of three categories: the labour class, the trading class and the professional class.

In the early stages migration of Indians was encouraged as regular labour supply was required for clearance.

34. Uma Shankar Singh, Burma and India, 1948-1962: A Study in the Foreign Policies of Burma and India and Burma’s Policy towards India (New Delhi), pp. 12, 13
of forest, building towns, roads and railways and cultivation of rice. The owners of rice mills mainly depended on labourers from India and their needs were fulfilled by private contractors which they preferred to the recruiting agencies set up under the Labour Act of 1876 by the Burmese Government. In 1886, the Famine Commission of India reviewed the position and recommended that Indians from congested areas in India should be encouraged to migrate to Burma for the development of waste and unproductive lands and that such efforts should be left to private enterprises. 35 Steamships were plying between Burma and India for which subsidies were given to shipping company and shipping agents too recruited Indians to work in Burma. Indians hold in the money-landing business, especially by Chettiyars, increased, the result being Loss of one-fourth of Burma's best rice lands, which the Burmese resented. The one group of Indian immigration which Burma welcomed and appreciated were the doctors. Most Burmese government doctors in the post-war period resigned and took up private practice. Hence the Burmese government sent a mission to India to recruit doctors. Under the Colombo Plan, India had given training to Burmese technicians and military personnel in its educational and defence establishments. 36


36. Thompson and Adloff, n. 3, p. 77
Initially Indian labour, capital and enterprise which helped to develop the economy of Burma were not a hindrance to the economic progress of the Burmese. It was after the first world war the Burmese realised the dominant economic position occupied by the Indian immigrants which was rightfully theirs, and this awareness led to anti-Indian feeling. With the depression of 1930 the Burmese became increasingly conscious of their disadvantageous position in the economy when compared to Indians. This dissatisfaction led to demand for separation from India and protection of their economic rights. 37

Anti-Indian riots broke out in 1930. About 120 lives were lost and many returned to India. Anti-Indian feelings in Burma also created a rift between Muslims and Hindus in Burma and this found expression in the riots of 1938 which caused about 200 deaths. Yet another riot took place in 1940. It was from this period that many Indians started returning to their homeland.

Once Burma was separated from India in 1937, Rangoon took all possible measures to restrict Indian immigration. The Land Purchase Bill authorised the State to allot lands to

the Burmese peasants bought from absentee landlords and the Tenancy Act endeavoured to reduce land rents which naturally affected the Indians as they formed the majority of the landowner class. The Chettiyars realised it was time to quit Burma. Most of the money was remitted to India and many returned from Burma. According to the Rangoon Municipal Bill of 1948 not less than half of the members in the Council were to be Burmans. This Bill was opposed by the Indians (as the population and municipal tax paid was more when compared to the representation in the Council) and eventually modified. 38

From the separation of Burma from India in 1937 till April 1940, it was agreed that no duties on Indian imports and no restriction on Indian immigration into Burma would be imposed. With its termination an agreement was signed on 3 April 1941. Indian goods were to get a preference of 15 per cent over non-Empire goods and 10 per cent over those of British origin and India could levy duties on imports from Burma. The Immigration Agreement which was negotiated was detrimental to Indian interests. Due to Vehement opposition of the Indians, London postponed its approval. 39

38. For a detailed account on Indians in Burma see Usha Mahajini, The role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya (Bombay, 1960)

39. Thompson and Adloff, n. 3, pp. 72-73
It was with the war in Far East in 1941 and Burma's occupation by Japan that there was a sharp decline in the Burmese Indian population for many of them returned home. After the war, with the reoccupation of Burma by the British in 1945, not many returned. Both India and Burma were not for it and the conditions in Burma were also not encouraging.  

In November 1946 the Indian government laid down certain rules for recruitment of skilled labour to work in Burma. Emigration permit would be granted on the basis of a written contract for two years period, wages not less than Rs.46 per month, allowances given by the Burma Government plus a security deposit. On their part, the Burmese government promulgated the Emergency Immigration Act in June 1947 according to which all persons entering Burma should have a visaed passport or permission from the Controller of Immigration.

With Burma's independence on 4 January 1948 the Constitution of Burma stated, that Indians who lived in Burma for eight out of ten years before independence could apply for citizenship. Those Indians who wanted to become Burmese

citizens should repudiate Indian nationality and those who wished to remain Indian citizens should register as aliens by April 1949. The time limit was postponed and by September 1949 out of about 250,000 Indians over 150,000 had acquired Burmese citizenship. The Burmese Government made it clear that in government services due share would be given to Indians but preference would be given to Indians who have acquired Burmese citizenship. But for this, they would enjoy equality of opportunity.41

Burma toeing its policy of 'Burma for the Burmese' introduced many regulations to curb the immigration of Indians and reduce their dominant role in the economy of Burma. The Tenancy Act of 1947 fixed the land rent received to be roughly twice the amount of land tax. The Imports Control Act, 1947 fixed quotas for imports for Burmese and non-Burmese citizens. The Land Alienation Act of 1948 prevented the sale of land to non-Burmese nationals. The Disposal of Tenancies Act, 1948, empowered the government to lease to tenants of its own choice the maximum area that a single tenant could cultivate effectively. The Transfer of Immovable Property Restriction Act, 1948, forbade property owners from selling, mortgaging or leasing their property to non-citizens of Burma.42

41. Thompson and Adloff, n. 3, p. 81
42. Ton That Thien, n. 37, pp. 160-1
The Land Nationalisation Act was extremely detrimental to Indian interests. According to this Act only 50 acres of land could be possessed by each family, the rest would be distributed to landless peasants by the government after paying compensation. Due to protest from Indians in Burma and India that the compensation was inadequate the Act was pending settlement till further discussions with the Indian Government. In June 1950 a delegation was sent to discuss with the Indian Government. A second delegation was sent in December 1953. In 1954 the Land Nationalisation (Amendment) Act fixed the compensation rate at 12 times the value of rent revenue. Representatives of the Burma Nattukottai Chettiyar's Association called on Prime Minister Nehru and apprised him about the plights of the Indian landowners who have been affected by the "token rates" of compensation. They told the Prime Minister that Indian landowners owned three million acres of land at a normal value of Rs.90 crores and the compensation demanded was only Rs.9 crores. Under the new Bill they would be given only Rs.1½ crores. They wanted higher compensation.43 The compensation issue continued to be an irritant in Indo-Burmese relations.

43. The Hindu, 20 March 1954
The All-Burma Indian Congress submitted a memorandum to Nehru when he visited Rangoon in October 1957 on his way home from Japan, drawing attention to the problems faced by Indians by the amendments to the Burmese Immigration and Foreigners Registration Act. They feared an exodus of Indians from Burma as a result of these regulations. The stay permit had been raised from Rs.10 to Rs.100 per annum. Non-renewal of permit would result in deportation according to the latest amendment. The fee for a renewal of Foreign Registration Certificate was raised from Rs.25 to Rs.50. The amount was exorbitant for labourers, cultivators and low-income workers. Nehru said that as the rule applied to all foreigners it could not be taken as a discriminatory measure against Indians alone. It was with the same eye New Delhi viewed the control on money transfers. Indians who were sending Rs.40 to India were allowed to remit only Rs.20. The Indian Government understood that this particular measure was taken due to foreign exchange difficulties. New Delhi was of the opinion that due to its economic difficulties Burma was not responsive to the Indian government's requests regarding the problems faced by Indians. However, this did not impair the cordial relations between the two countries.

44. Ibid., 26 October 1957
The Government of Burma invited applications to pay compensation for lands nationalised during 1955-1956 and 1956-1957 and the deadline for submission of application was extended from 30 September 1957 to 31 December 1957. Lands nationalised during 1953-1954 and 1954-1955 were being paid compensation. In 1959 it was said that many cultivators were prosecuted for not having complied with immigration laws. Though many of them were settled there for three generations and were entitled citizenship, 8000 applications were pending disposal while others have registered under Foreign Registration Act out of ignorance or misunderstanding of rules. As the rules were enforced more rigidly those Indians were unable to bear the heavy charges for registration as foreigners. Hence representatives were sent to Burma to request for speedy settlement of pending applications and considerate treatment to those registered under Foreign Registration Certificate. In March 1960 the Government of Burma arranged for cash compensation paid for the lands nationalised to be repatriated to India. Compensation was paid partly in cash and partly in bond. Those paid in bond could not be repatriated. In June 1961 about 33,000 Indian labourers were not allowed to remit money to India. From 1948 to 1958 Rs. 40 was remitted,

45. *Foreign Affairs Record*, vol. V, no. 12, December 1959, p. 457
which was reduced to Rs.20 and even that was totally stopped on grounds of lack of foreign exchange. Premier U Nu stated that ban on money remittance was due to misunderstanding between Burmese and Indian officials regarding enhancement of remittance charges and the ban would be lifted soon. However, the Burma government allowed only 17 lakhs to be remitted in 1961 which was half the amount of the previous year.

In March 1962 General Ne Win, through a coup seized power and became the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. The new party policy of 'Burmese way of Socialism' brought all sectors of the economy under Government control. The Government declared, those eligible for citizenship certificated but registered under Foreign Registration Certificate and unable to pay the fees, should apply for citizenship and all others to take passports from their country of origin. Termination notice was given to 30 Indian doctors who were employed on contractual basis and were serving in various hospitals. Non-Burmese were debarred from money-lending business. The Government under its socialist programme imposed control on imports and exports. Eventually rice trade too would be taken over. Both Burmese and Foreign Banks were nationalised in February 1963.

46. Statesman, 12 July 1961
47. The Hindu, 28 July 1961
The Burmese Government allowed 12 of the 14 foreign banks which were nationalised to transfer their original capital to their respective head offices. Travellers from Burma to India were allowed to take only up to Rs.50. In March 1964 all private-owned wholesale shops, warehouses, stores and timber shops were nationalised. Building, furniture, godowns and land of the entrepreneurs were to become Government property. Compensation was to be paid to the owners.

These measures affected a lot of Indians and in 1963 about 25,000 returned to India. New Delhi helped the Indians who wanted to return by plying ships and airline services. Nearly 50,000 Indians were affected by nationalisation of shops and total assets amounted to Rs.6 crores. Burma's demonetization of high denomination currency (kyat 100 and kyat 50) also affected the Indian community.

Compensation was promised but no immediate steps were taken to implement it. Those who wished to return to India were not allowed to take currency or family jewellery.

48. The Times (London), 25 February 1964
49. Lok Sabha Debates, vol. 30, nos. 51-60, 28 April 1964, p. 13182. See also Hindustan Times, 29 April 1964
50. The Hindu, 21 May 1964
The Indians in Burma are passing through a troublesome phase and their deteriorating condition clearly revealed that there was no future for them in Burma. It is hoped that this sensitive issue of the difficulties faced by Indian minority would be solved amicably. As stated by the Indian Ambassador, Vice Admiral Ram Dass Katari, to Burma:

Presently, the smooth sea of our cordial relations is temporarily disturbed by a small ripple. This arises out of the issue relating to Indian nationals....It is an issue that is historical in its origin, being a legacy of our common colonial past. I feel confident, however, that with our belief in humanity and the dignity of man, and our tradition of goodwill and cooperation, this issue will be solved in a mutually satisfactory manner.55

55. _Guardian_ (Rangoon), 9 June 1964