CHAPTER VI

ELECTIONS, PARTIES AND ISSUES: 1967-1987

In Mauritius the process of election was introduced in 1885. Till 1948, election was held on a very restricted franchise qualified by property criteria. It was only in 1948 that it was possible for the majority of Indo-Mauritians to participate on a large scale. From 1948 onward those who were British citizens in the colony— all land owners, military personnel and the Mauritians "who can speak, read and write simple sentences and can sign his name in English" were qualified to vote.¹ Female who qualified the above criteria had right to vote.² Five constituencies returned 19 members to the Legislative Council. The only organised party was the Mauritius Labour Party (MLP). Ramgoolam was not a member of the party then, but he was a nominated member of the Council. Some planters earlier present in the Council, were also elected on individual basis. They did not have any organised party. One of the elected members from the "plantocracy" was Jules Koenig who later founded the Parti Mauricien.

¹ The language acceptable for such electoral test were English, French, Hindustani, Tamil, Telgu, Urdu and Chinese.

² This provision of female franchise was being opposed by Ramgoolam who thought the benefit of this provision would go to Franco-Mauritians at hustings and not to Indo-Mauritians who were mostly illiterate.
The second general election was held in 1953. It was marked by two main developments. First, the emergence of another political party, **Ralliement Mauricien** (RM) which in 1965 changed its name to **Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate** (PMSD). This party was formed to counter both the Hindus and the MLP who were demanding universal adult suffrage and responsible government. The second important development was the entry of Hindu leaders into the MLP.

In the election the MLP got 13 out of 19 seats, two seats went to the Ralliment Mauricien (RM) and four to independents. The MLP got 44 percent votes, the independents and RM got 27.5 percent each. Later Abdool Razack Mohammed, one of the RM leader, founded the Comité d’Action Musulman (CAM) representing the interests of the Muslim Community on the island. This election returned some politicians who played significant role in the subsequent years. They were Veerasamy Ringadoo and Satcam Boolell (both independents but became ministers in the MLP government); and Sookdeo Bissoondoyal who founded the Independent Forward Block (IFB).³

The 1959 election had a different Constitutional and electoral structure. Mauritius was divided into 40 constituencies and each returning one candidate. The IFB and the CAM were two additional political parties while the RM changed its name to Parti Mauricien (PM).

³ Sookdeo Bissoondoyal had been elected in 1948 with the support of the MLP but in 1953 he won against the MLP candidate.
The MLP went into alliance with the CAM. A total of 163 candidate contested the election. The MLP got 26 seats, its ally the CAM 5, the IFB 6 and Parti Mauricien 3 seats. The PM got all the three seats in the urban district of Plaines Wilhemes. Gaetan Duval, a young advocate, made his first entry through the PM after defeating his MLP rival. This election was marked by controversies over the ascendancy of Indo-Mauritians in politics.

Between 1959 and 1963 PM had considerably strengthened its hold under its deputy leader Gatan Duval. This period also gave birth to a dozen of ethnic sectarian parties, which soon attached themselves to one or other larger parties. These were mainly, (i) Tamil United party whose leader joined PMSD in 1967, (ii) Liberal Party of Elizer Francois who joined the MLP and later defected to PMSD, (iii) Muslim United party which was against the CAM, (iv) Democratic Labour party of the labourers led by Raymond Rault who finally went to the MLP.

In the 1963 elections 152 candidates contested. Labour suffered a reverse. It got 23 seats and 40 percent of vote with its ally the CAM; the PM-8, the IFB-7 and independents 2. Aneeroodh Jugnauth the future Prime Minister was elected from the IFB.

NEW ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The present electoral system of Mauritius was initiated at the all-party London Conferences of 1965. The design of future electoral system was a major point of disagreement. The Secretary of State Anthony Greenwood was unable to evolve a commonly accepted frame work. Therefore he proposed that a commission be appointed to recommend a
suitable system acceptable to most parties. 4

A three member commission, headed by Harold Banwell, came to Mauritius in January 1966. It examined the representations from all parties and individuals and found a wide divergence on the proposed system. The commission decided on 20 constituencies with each returning 3 members to the Legislative Assembly. Besides, the island of Rodrigue was to return 2 members. Further it provided for 8 'Corrective seats' which intended to give representation to under represented communities and parties with the help of an elaborate system specially designed for it. This 'corrective system' was strongly

4 These broadly agreed principles were; Multimembers constituencies, a common electoral roll, the provision for discouraging small political parties, an opportunity for fair representative of all sections of the society, representation from island of Rodrigue. See Report on the Mauritius Constitutional conference 1965, Sessional paper No. 6 of 1965 (Port Louis, 1965)

5 The other two commissioners were T. Ramdall and Colin Leys. Banwell was the member of parliamentary Boundaries Commission in Britain and was acquainted with electoral intricacies. Calin Leys was an expert on the affairs and specialist of third world countries.

6 The main consideration of the commission in finally deciding the present electoral system of Mauritius, was to discourage the development of small sectarian interest based parties, to give a system which does not magnify the power of the majority as to curtail their Constitutional right, to make it indispensable for the main parties to seek support from all communities and to make the method of voting and allocation of seats easy to understand. See, Report of the Banwell commission on the electoral system Sessional Paper No.5 of 1966 (Port Louis, 1966) p.5.
opposed by the MLP and its allies, the IFB and the CAM. In the Legislative Assembly Ramgoolam described it as a "diabolic system", "a Machiavellian innovation "a political rape of democracy" which was to undo the achievement of their epic struggle for political, economic and social justice". The MLP, the CAM and the IFB organised protest rallies and meetings. They sent telegrams to leading newspapers of the world, to Prime Ministers and Heads of Governments of Commonwealth countries seeking their support against this 'corrective system'. As a result John Stonehouse, Assistant Parliamentary Secretary came to Mauritius to sort out the issue. This was later changed to 'best loser' system. The change was hardly substantial but all parties finally accepted it. In the 'corrective system' 5 seats were to be distributed to the small political parties and under-represented communities.

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7 See, Legislative Assembly Debates, Hansard 7th June 1966.


9 The colonial government had accepted the recommendation of the Commission but the MLP was rigid for its demands to alter it. John Stonehouse, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for the colonies was sent by colonial office to sort out the issue. He had visited Mauritius earlier and knew Duval, Ramgoolam and Harold Walter. His mediation and suggested change in "corrective systems" gave Ramgoolam a publicity of forced victory against U.K. See, Agreement Reached in Mauritius on the Future Electoral System on the Occasion of the visit of Mr. John Stonehouse, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Colonies; Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1966, (Port Louis, 1966).

Besides any party getting 25% was to be given additional number of seats to make its 25% felt in the Assembly. This 'corrective' system smelled of list-voting which Ramgoolam was strongly opposing. But Ramgoolam agreed for the communal distribution of these seats. All the eight 'best losers' seats had to go to communities which were, under represented, but without disturbing the electoral verdict. It is on this system that five subsequent elections took place in 1967, 1976, 1982, 1983 and 1987. The first election took place when Mauritius was a colony, all subsequent elections followed the same basis. The leaders, parties, tactics, ethnic and religions or economic context did not change abruptly after 1967.

The electoral system thus prescribed that any citizen of Mauritius who is 18 years old has the voting right. Boundaries of the twenty constituencies in the island was to be determined by a Boundaries Commission (EBC). It consisted of a chairman and a maximum four or minimum two members to be appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. Before giving his advice, the Prime Minister was expected to consult the leader of

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11 Originally the age for getting franchise rights was 21 years. But this was reduced to 18 years by Ramgoolam government before the general election 1976.

12 Art 38(1) of the Constitution.
the Opposition, though the advise of the later was not mandatory. The Legislative Assembly could either reject or accept recommendations of the Commission but it could not modify it. 13 Besides there was to be an Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC). Its chairman appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Two to four member of the ESC were appointed by Governor General on the advise of the Prime Minister in consultation with the leader of opposition. 14

There is then the Electoral Commissioner, whose office is a public office. He is appointed by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. 15 The ESC and Electoral Commissioner have combined responsibility for registration of voters and holding elections.16

13 The Electoral Boundary Commissions routinely reviews the boundaries of the constituencies every 10 year unless otherwise called by parliament to do so. The EBC is supposed to alter the boundaries of the constituencies so "that the number of inhabitants in each constituency is as nearly equal as in reasonably practicable to population quota". [Art 39 (3)] Here population quota means total number of inhabitants divided by total number of constituencies which is 20. Further "in order to take account of means of communication, geographical features, density of population and boundaries of administrative areas" the number of the inhabitants can be greater or less.

The demarcation of the boundary of constituencies both for Legislative Assembly election and for municipalities had raised controversies. Opposition had charged boundary had been demarcated in a way that stronghold area of the opposition had been parceled into many constituencies thereby reducing the chances of opposition victory.

14 Article 38(2) of the constitution

15 Art 40 (1-3) of the constitution. 16 The two institutions are separate though they have the same responsibility. Whether the Electoral Commissioner has acted in accordance with the advice or decision of ESC or not, this can not be inquired into in any court of law [Art 41 (5)]. On some occasion differences between the two created controversy.

16 The two institutions are separate though they have the same responsibility. Whether the Electoral Commissioner has acted in accordance with the advice or decision of ESC or not, this can not be inquired into in any court of law [Art 41 (5)]. On some occasion differences between the two created controversy.
Each voter is supposed to cast three votes in his/her constituency otherwise the vote is invalid. Beside the 62 elected candidates, there are 8 seats to be filled by the 'best looser system'—a complicated system elaborated in the first schedule of the Constitution. The eight seats of 'best looser system' are introduced to give representation to all communities.\(^{17}\) The first four seats allocated to the most successful unreturned candidates\(^{18}\) who belong to 'appropriate' communities irrespective of their parties.\(^{19}\) The appropriate community is decided after allocation of each seats. If more communities are equally eligible then the seat goes to candidate with highest vote. The second four seats are meant to

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\(^{17}\) For election purpose Mauritian Constitution recognizes four communities. Asian population has been divided to form three communities, the Hindus, Muslims and the Chinese. All other section, the French, Coloured and Blacks form together the fourth Community called general population. Each candidate who registers himself for election has to mention his community. The eight seats of 'best looser' goes only to those who had registered himself as a candidate of any party. Any two or more parties registered as alliance are considered as single party for allocating these seats. No independent candidate is entitled to be considered for the 'best looser system'.

\(^{18}\) The most unsuccessful candidate is determined on the basis of percentage of vote each candidate gets in his constituencies. It is not determined on the basis of absolute number of votes received, because the electoral strength of different constituencies varies.

\(^{19}\) The appropriate community is one which on the basis of last population census has less percentage of MLA belonging to its communities as compared to community percentage in over all population of Mauritius. After allocation of each seat the percentage representation of each community in parliament is recalculated and therefore appropriate community is decided for each seat separately. See Section 8 of the first schedule of the Constitution. For explanation see "J. M Boisson and R. Louit" "Les Elections Legislatives à l'Ile Maurice" in Annuaire des Pays de l'Ocean Indien 1976, pp.226-227.
maintain the party strengths in the Assembly, existing before the allocation of any of first four seats.\footnote{After allocation of first four seats, the number of seats which had gone to second largest party in this is determined. Same number of seats are allotted to the largest party from the second four seats, each time seat by seat determining the appropriate community for the largest party and the unreturned candidate with the highest percentage of vote from that community.}

Having done the possible allocation of seats under the above two provisions [Section 5 (3 and 4)], if any number of seats is left out of the total of eight seats then it is allocated under the third provision [Section 5(5)]. If still any seat remain unallocated then fourth provision is used [Section 5 (6)] and this is repetitive till all are filled.

Under the third provision seats are allotted one by one (and after each allocation the appropriate community and party is determined) to the most successful unreturned candidate of most successful party that has not received any of the eight seats so far and has candidate available from the appropriate community. The next seat goes to the most successful candidate belonging both to the appropriate community and to the second most successful party which has not got any of the eight seats. This is repeated till any of the eight seats are unfilled.

If there is still any unallotted seat, fourth provision is used. Under this provision the first of remaining seats goes to the most successful unreturned candidate belonging to the appropriate community and second most successful party. The next seat to the third most successful party having unreturned
candidate belonging to appropriate communities. The next seat goes to the fourth most successful party having unreturned candidate from appropriate communities and this is repeated till all the seats are filled.

**DISTRIBUTION OF ETHNIC CATEGORIES**

The categorisation of ethnic communities form a part of the electoral system. Among the four Constitutional categories Hindus are the largest. Forming around 52% of the population. Two third of the Hindus live in four rural districts of Flacq, Riviere du Rempart, Pamplemousses and Moka. It is proportionally very less in urban districts of Port Louis and Plaines Wilhems. Besides there are internal divisions within the community based on the place of their origin in India and language. An overwhelming majority of the Bhojpuri speaking people came from Bihar and Eastern U.P. Around one fifth of the total Hindu population are from southern India who speak Tamil and Telgu.21 The Tamils and some Telgu consider themselves as a separate political group and dissociate from the majority Bhojpuri group. Lower caste Hindus have two groups- Galhot Rajput Sabha and Raviveda Sabha. They also vote independent of the Hindu stream.

The General Population, which includes all those who are non-Asiatic, is the most heterogeneous. It comprises

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21 According to 1972 census 8.5 percent of Indo-Mauritian are Tamil speaking and 5.6 percent are Telgu. Indo-Mauritian form 68.4 percent of the total population.
CONSTITUENCY WISE COMMUNITY BREAK-UP
(Based on 1972 Census)

Percentage of Communities

Constituency No. ->

- General
- Hindus (B)
- T&T
- Muslims
- Chinese

(B) = Bhojpuri; T&T = Tamil & Telugu

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comprises around 10,000 French of European origin, black people of African origin and people of mixed origin. They form 28.7% of the population with a two third concentrated in Urban district of Prot Louis and Plaines Wilhemes. They are also concentrated along the coastal area of the island. They largely form the PMSD and later the MMM also. The third community is Muslim who form 16.6%, concentrated in urban area specially in districts of Port Louis. In the first three constituencies of Mauritius lying in Port Louis, Muslims have decisive vote. They have many sects but these have not stimulated the formation of multiple political groups.

Though the earliest political party representing Muslims, the CAM, had mostly sided with the MLP, which was supported by Bhojpuri speaking Hindus, but the CAM itself did not have a large following in the Muslim community. A sizable section of the Muslims voted for PMSD and later the MMM. The smallest community, Sino-Mauritians represent around 3% of the population. It is mostly concentrated in the district of Port Louis. Because of this it plays a significant role in the politics of Port Louis.

ELECTION OF 1967

After the 1965 London conference, it was decided that the Mauritian MPs should determine whether Mauritius wanted to be independent or an 'association' with the British empire. Ramgoolam’s Labour Party wanted independence. The PMSD led by Duval, was against independence (see, Chapter II). Duval’s aim was to get simple majority and block independence. He knew about the
division within the support-base of Ramgoolam and the IFB - or the Hindus. The 1967 election therefore was not to decide to whom political power went, but to decide which of the communities would hold political power at that point. Ironically the PMSD was organising rally against the Ramgoolam’s collaboration with the British, even while wanting Mauritius to remain in British empire. The apprehension about "Cooli ruling Mauritius" was put up in the garb of economic arguments. For both sides, something more than the regular election was at stake. Both were ready to make compromises which were untypical of them.

PMSD, so far openly pro-Franco Mauritians and pro-Creole gave the slogan of 'Hindoo mon frère' (Hindus, my brothers). 22 Duval denounced communalism and promised that any supporter or member of his party found communal in conversation or action would to be punished. 23 To Hindu this came as surprise. The MLP became increasingly afraid of defection of Indo-Mauritians into Parti Mauricien. Duval opened a dialogue with Tamils, low caste Hindu and Muslims also.

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22 He gave this call at Champ de Mars. He asserted that his party was socialist and nationalistic. See, Anand Mullo, *Our Struggle: 20th Century Mauritius* (Delhi, Vision Books, 1982) p. 116

Though this slogan was repulsive for Franco, Mulattos or Creole middle class. But it was not difficult for them to understand Duval’s stand in the light of other alternative - the Hindu domination.

A group of low caste Hindus formed Peoples Socialist Party and sided it with the PM. A number of prominent Muslims resigned from the CAM and joined PM. Independent Forward Block was already there as a Hindu-based party opposed to Ramgoolam’s policy of promoting high caste Hindus. All Mauritian Hindu Congress (AMHC) – an extreme right Hindu party – was also formed to counter the militant and intimidating PMSD.  

For the MLP the prevailing situation was not favourable. Corruption, patronage, were flagrant. The large scale unemployment predicted by "Titmus and Meade Report" had come true. Disillusionment with Labour government was growing fast.

Before announcing the date for general election, the process of registration of voters had to be completed. It was a time consuming affair. To minimise fraud and irregularities in the process a team of Commonwealth Observers came to Mauritius and report to the Secretary of State, British government. This team noted some attempts at "dumping". As the constituencies were demarcated

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24 It was formed by Verma, Dabee and A. Jugnauth. The same Jugnauth later on led and presided the MMM vowing to finish communalism and ethnicity for ever. See, A. Mulloo *Road to Independence* (Delhi, 1968) p.43.


26 The observer group consisted of a Canadian Q.C, an Indian, two British M.P.s, an M.P. from Trinidad and a Maltese Chairman, See, A. R. Mannick *Mauritius the Development of a Plural Society*, (Nottingham, Spokesman, 1979) p.132.
by pairing two earlier constituencies, political parties tried to get voters from near-by safe constituencies to the neighbouring marginal constituencies for registration. This was being done to swing votes in the marginal constituencies. The commonwealth observer team had found that in 8 constituencies the number of registered voters exceeded the number found in a house to house canvass. 27 With the completion of registration, the PMSD threatened to launch a protest movement if Ramgoolam did not hold the elections soon 28. The PMSD wanted the Governor General to use his Constitutional power and announce the date of general election. The MLP insisted that a decision regarding date was the premier's prerogative. The PMSD was enraged by studied silence of Governor Renne. A delay in election till the onset of crop season in July meant that Ramgoolam could provide employment to some 500,000 unemployed people. In May the PMSD members left the Legislative Assembly, but expecting further agitation Ramgoolam announced the date for 7th August 1967. The major worry on both sides was choosing the right candidate for each constituency. Besides placating the General population whom he represented, Duval had to give sizable share to Muslims and Hindus if they were


28 Mannick, n.26, p.132.
to be won over. But a more crucial decision for Duval was whom to offer the 'safe seats'? Could a Hindu contesting on PMSD ticket from a Creole dominated constituency get votes from the Creoles? Duval embarked on an 'all or nothing policy'. His strategy was to win at least in 11 constituencies (51 percent of seats) to decide 'Association' or 'independence'. Based on "all or nothing" strategy he put up capable candidates in the marginal constituencies "hoping that their personal strength would carry the constituency or that at least one or two of them would return on a split vote" He himself did not contest from Curepipe but went to Port Louis. Ramgoolam, had to make 60 nominations to be distribute among the MLP, the IFB, the CAM and the Hindu Congress. All of them had gathered under the Independence Party while maintaining their separate organisations. It was a united front on the issue of

29 Though most of these people who came from Muslims and lower cast Hindu community lacked status, but they had to be rewarded not only for their loyalty but also for giving a non-communal appeal to the party.

30 Adele S.Simmons, Modern Mauritius (Bloomington, 1982) p.182.

31 ibid.
getting independence.\textsuperscript{32}

The allocation of seats to different parties was problematic. The IFB placed 12 of its candidates and presented Ramgoolam with a \textit{fait accompli}.\textsuperscript{33} Ramgoolam could negotiate smoothly with the the CAM. But the Hindu Congress withdrew from the alliance and decided to contest alone.

Ramgoolam based his campaign on the issue of independence. The PMSD was projected as anti-Hindu and representative of only Franco-Mauritian who had mistreated and used abusive terms for the Indo-Mauritian. Their ethnic passions were aroused by reciting the derogatory terms the Francos used against them.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{32} The formation of 'Parti de l'Indépendence' had been announced in a public meeting at Bon Accueil on 7th November 1965. The goal of the IP was to prevent dispersal of votes. "Les Ponts Pour un front de libération ont été jetés et il appartient à tous ceux qui veulent l'indépendence de ce joindre à ce mouvement". See U. Bissoondoyal, \textit{Promises to keep} (Delhi, 1990) p.232.

  \item \textsuperscript{33} Simmons, n.30, P.181

  \item \textsuperscript{34} They were 'envahisseurs asiatique' (Asian Invaders), "accapareurs" (grabber) 'Chef Khooniste', 'le Pontif numero un du khoonism militant'. These were used in newspaper \textit{Cerneein} in February 1953. Further the earlier slogan of PM against universal franchise saying it meant 'peril Hindou' Indianisation' Annexation of Mauritius to India' Swamping of western culture under Asiatic barbarism', 'the arrival of ship load of Langoutis' were used. Indians used to be called Malabar and Bengali - a derogatory term meaning slaves.
\end{itemize}
It ridiculed the PMSD slogan of Hindoo mon frère by exposing all its past statement and policies which was overtly anti-Hindu. It reminded Hindus of the PM activists about undressing their women and shouting 'Malbar nous pas oulé.35

The socialist Labour dominated IP did not ask Hindu or Mauritian vote on communal line but its campaign to depict the PMSD as a staunch anti Hindu, left no alternative to Hindus except to vote for IP. No third party in Mauritian elections in the past had fared well and polarisation along the two main ethnic axis appeared to be the only alternative. Parti Mauriicen accepted the challenge.

It came out with socialistic and non-sectarian manifesto36 Its officers were sent to Reunion to

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35 (We do not want Malabari) see, Mulloo, n.22, p.114 Besides it charged Hindu candidates who were contesting from the PMSD plateform as 'pawns' and 'bought off' candidates fielded to divide Hindu vote. It accused the PMSD of creating anarchy to confuse voters by creating a climate of economic insecurity and associating independece with famine and starvation.

In March 1967 the PMSD was alleged to have instructed its supporters including rich Franco-Mauritians to withdraw their money form the bank and post office to create panic. The anti-independence campaign was partially responsible for 4,000 people of General population emigrating to Australia. Ibid pp.112-13. See also Mannick , n.26, P.132.

36 According to manifesto of the PMSD, its aim was "o free main materially and morally, to assure them of security and to give them the free opportunity to develop themselves within their responsibilities towards the community. The interest of the people must be before private interest. In a nutshell the main aim of the PMSD is to wipe out inequality. We want things to happen in such a way that racial discrimination, religious divisions, classes, favouritism and nepotism became only night mares of the past. See, Mannick, n.26, p.133.
study modern and effective campaign techniques. All agents of the party were paid and organised by party officers.\textsuperscript{37} It opened one room offices spread through out the island from where it was distributing key-rings, hats, shirts, sample ballot papers and pamphlets. A pirated radio was to go on air, broadcasting the PMSD message and music but it never functioned as planned.\textsuperscript{38} Fund collection of the PMSD was centralised, to meet the election expenditure of its candidates. Duval was the central figure and PMSD activists went round calling for votes to Duval which meant voting for 'association' free British passport, access to European Common Market and an escape from the problems of unemployment, debt and over population the Labour party had produced during 20 years rule.

Labour party adopted a more informal campaign style. At each constituency Ramgoolam addressed one public meeting. Each village held informal meetings where IP activists and the candidates could mould their talk to suit the local audience. Voters were flattered to be invited to these private gatherings and appointed as agents. Communalism could dominate these meetings without being countered by other parties or press. At the national level, Ramgoolam countered the PMSD campaign by asserting that an independent Mauritius would get

\textsuperscript{37} For details See, Simmons, n.30, P.182-83.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
money from the World Bank and IMF and that USA and France were ready to help if Mauritius became independent. He explained that 'association' meant continued collaboration of plantocracy and colonial office for the benefit of Franco-Mauritians. It charged the PMSD of spending millions of rupees to buy voters. "Take their money and vote for us" 39 However, if the PMSD had more money, the Labour Party had the privilege of being in government. Between March and August 1967 the number of relief workers increased from 19,290 to 30,887. 40 Labour also claimed to have large number of intellectuals and trade union leaders as its supporters. 41

The elections were scheduled on Saturday. Schools became polling booths, voters received ballot papers containing ten names. Exactly three vote were to be cast as less than three were to make the votes invalid. A special movie was made and shown by mobile cinema how to cast vote. 42

39 In meeting at Vacoas, 30 July 1967, quoted in Simmons, n.30, p.184.

40 Central Statistical Office, Biannual Digest of Statistics, June 1968, p.44.

41 The IP was projecting Marcel Gabon Hervé Masson, Philippe Forget Guy Balaucy, Ramlallah, Hazareesingh, R.K. Boodhooon, Aunaaauth Beejadhur, J.N. Roy, Basudev Bissoondoyal, Mulloo, Kher Jagatsingh, Buckory, Edoo, Beehary etc. See Mulloo, Our struggle, n.22, p.115

42 These attempts to educate voters gave a positive result. Despite being a large number of illiterate voters only 1.7% of votes were invalid. See, Mannick, n.26, P.132
Newspapers published the detailed instructions. Many steps were taken for ensuring fair poll.\(^{43}\)

There was heavy polling but impersonation was feared as misrepresentation was a favorite trick. Both parties asked their supporters "vote early, be the first to vote in your name"\(^{44}\) As a result by noon 65 percentage of voters had cast their votes.\(^{45}\) Polling was not totally peaceful. In Quatre Bornes there were minor scuffles but police restored normalcy. A major trouble broke out in constituency no 3 in Port Louis.\(^{46}\) Muslims as a minority were more inclined to vote with the PMSD but leader of the CAM, Mohammed's came to realise that he was going to lose.\(^{47}\) By mid-

\(^{43}\) The team of commonwealth observers noted before the poll that electoral legislation of Mauritius contained all necessary safeguards to preserve the secrecy of polls and to guarantee the trust worthiness of all those working in polling stations. The police and Electoral Commission devised plans for keeping the ballot boxes in sealed and lighted room; and candidates to satisfy themselves about their safety and reliability.

\(^{44}\) Simmons, n.30, p.184.

\(^{45}\) Ibid. 46

Independence party (CAM) had put three Muslims candidates along with two Chinese candidates to split the vote of Chinese community expected to go to the PMSD. This constituency had around 75% Muslims votes. The Muslim leadership of Mohammed of the CAM was being challenged by Ibrahim Dawood of the PMSD.

\(^{47}\) Mohammed's leadership of the muslim community was at stake. Mohammed's men blocked the road and started the rumour that Dawood had withdrawn. Mohammed's men realised this by counting the cars of Dawood supporters bringing voters. It exceeded the supporters of Mohammed reaching the polling booth.
afternoon, Mohammed's supports were destroying cars of the PMSD. Riots broke out.

The PMSD retaliated by burning houses and attacking Muslims. It took a communal turn - Muslims (Mohammed supporters) against Creole and Chinese.48. The special mobile force controlled the situation after using tear gas. Mohammed's act to intimidate his rivals had created a tense situation. In the night the Governor General appeared on the television and appealed for peace. But Mohammed's doubt came true Muslims had mostly voted for the PMSD.

In contrast to the earlier elections this election exhibited strong party discipline. In 13 constituencies the IP got all the three seats. In addition to 2 seats of Rodrigue, the PMSD got all 21 seats of 7 constituencies. In one sense the voters went by parties irrespective of community or candidates.

Communalism was active at different levels. The PMSD could get its candidate elected- Creole, Hindu, Muslim, Chinese - only in the constituencies which had a majority of the General population and Chinese and Muslims. Labour could get Creoles elected from constituencies which had Hindu majority. Communalism was active in deciding which

48 It was expected that both Mohammed and Duval would have goondas in their pay in Port Louis-3 watching for trouble. Many Creole supporters of Duval had come from Curepipe.
party represented the interests and aspirations of different communities. Creoles voted fairly solid for the PMSD. The IP got votes from Hindus. Muslims were divided in their allegiance but a larger majority voted for the PMSD. So did the Chinese.

Second feature of this election was the different identification of political parties. Labour as a party of the working class which included Hindus and Creoles. The Hindus supported it because most were also agricultural labourers. The PM was a party of plantocracy. Both the IP and PMSD claimed to be socialist but their support base sharply precipitated communal lines. The LP got overwhelming support from Hindus and some from Muslims. The PMSD emerged as the party of minorities with massive support from Creole, Chinese and Franco and also from a larger section of the Muslims. Going by election results, no constituency with a sizeable Muslim population returned a Labour candidate.

Thirdly, there came about a rural-urban divide. All the rural seats were won by Labour, whereas all urban seats went to the PMSD. Rodrigue with 97 percent of Creole population returned the PMSD candidates. Fourthly, with 54.5 percent of votes, the Labour got 62.9 percent of seats whereas the PMSD with 43.5 percent got only 37 percent seats. Fifthly, the geographic and demographic demarcation of electoral boundaries showed that in a

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49 Till 1950s this class orientation of the parties continued though from 1948 onward the communal identification of the parties had already begun. But by 1967 the class identification of parties changed into communal.
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1967
(Results : Seat Wise)

No. of Seats

Constituencies-->

(I.P.) (PMSD)

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
particular condition where voting involved majority vis-a-vis minorities, polarisation had taken place (and presuming that more or less communities voted in block).50 Further the central election issue was 'independence' or 'association'. But, in practice candidates were asking votes for either Duval or Ramgoolam. This feature survived in subsequent elections as well. 'Who will be the head of the government from a particular party'? became important in post independent politics. Finally the 1967 elections established a precedence for coalition and bipolar alliance governments. This reflected a political culture in which however passionate any group may felt about any issue, they all accepted the electoral mandate.

Post-Independent Politics

THE 1976 ELECTIONS

A decade after independence the situation had changed. Socio-economic issues, the government's record in office and respect for civil and trade union.

50 Hindu based party could win 10 of the rural constituencies (5 to 14). In seven constituencies the PMSD have fair chances (in 1 to 3 and 17 to 20). In the rest of three constituencies Hindus are slightly more (15) down (14) or almost equal (16) to combine of minorities. Out come in these constituencies would depend on factors like turn over from different communities, personalities of candidates, split of votes and floating votes. The single constituency of Rodrigue has 97 percent of general population and in a communally charged election General population candidates would have over whelming majority.
rights presented a totally different context in the 1976 elections. The government had already extended the life of parliament from 5 to 10 years. Democratic rights of protest and strike had been severely restricted. Unemployment and economic crisis had soared. Ramgoolam's move for all-party consensus had left a vacuum for credible political opposition. This vacuum was filled by the meteoric rise of the Militant Mouvement Mauritian (MMM) as discussed in Chapter III. It had organized itself as a cadre based disciplined party based on Marxist ideology. It attacked corruption, inefficiency and failure of government. The deepening economic crisis and repressive rule made it prominent and strong. With young and energetic leadership cutting across the communal divide, the MMM made its debut in a parliamentary democracy.

For 1976 elections 21 parties registered themselves.\textsuperscript{51} There were 462,034 voters. Four hundred and eleven candidates of whom 370 contested finally. There was a large number of independents.

Independence Party contested all 62 seats. The MMM fielded 60 candidates and supported OPR in Rodrigue; the PMSD 59 seats and support to the IFB's 30 candidates, the MMMSP-15, and the UDM - 34 seats. Other parties, which mushroomed on eve of the elections, aimed to get in through the 'best looser' system. They were mainly composed of disgruntled elements or those denied ticket by the main parties. They had limited programmes and policies.

\textsuperscript{51} The list of main parties on next page
Main Parties were:

1 I.P. Independence Party
2 P.M.S.D. Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate.
3 M.M.M. Mouvement Militant Mauricien.
4 I.F.B. Independent Forward Bloc.
5 U.D.M. Union Démocratique Mauricien. (Democratic Union of Mauritius)
6 M.M.M.S.P. MMM Social Progressiste.
7 P.S.P. People Socialist Party.
8 P.C.R. Parti du Centre Républicain. (Party of Center Republic)
9 C.P Communist Party
10 U.P.G. Union de la Population Générale. (Union of General Population)
13 M.M.D.L. Mauritius Muslim Democratic League.
14 M.M.R.P. Mauritius Muslim Right Party.
15 S.P.M. Socialist Party of Mauritius.
16 P.E. Parti de l’Est (Party of East)
17 P.D.P. People Democratic Party.
18 P.D.S. Parti du Sud. (Party of South)
19 P.D.P. Parti du People (Party of People)
20 O.P.R. Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais (Organisation of people of Rodrigue)
21 U.T.L. Union des Travailleurs Libres. (Union of Free Workers)
The Campaign

The MMM was the first to launch its election campaign. It had already initiated a process of round the year activisation programme by different politico-cultural activities (see Chapter II). The Labour Party, along with the CAM, started campaign later. The PMSD campaign for 'cock power' (its electoral symbol was cock) also picked up during December.

Convassing and campaigns were colourful, intense and multi media based. Newspaper reports were not only prolific but people read more than one paper. Some papers presented party opinions, others gave informations.

The press published reports of public meetings, radio broadcasts, different interest and pressure groups. Open air public meeting was another important feature. Being small in size and population, all parties tried to reach the electorate directly. Such meetings were

52 Because of the presence of a significant illiterate electorate population, main parties were given a colour and a symbol. Red for the Labour Party with symbol of a key. Blue for the PMSD with 'cock' symbol, The MMM chose mauve colour with heart as symbol and the IFB had yellow with scale as symbol.

53 Among the main eight papers of the island, Le Populaire and Le Militant were opinion paper of the PMSD and the MMM. Among six other which were papers for information, Four became open supporters of different political parties during election. The Star for the CAM Advance and Nation for Labour, Le Cerneen for the PMSD, Le Mauricien and L'Express were not openly supporting any party, though the former was sympathetic to the PMSD.

54 Press coverage and campaign was mostly in French some times in Creole (in Le Militant and Soleil Rouge of the MMMSP) and occasionally in English.
usually followed by private parleys where candidates and parties discussed ideological issues, foreign and socio-economic policies and got ideas on local and personal needs.\footnote{55}{The Labour party's candidates were utilizing their position in government to promise job to unemployed family members. The government had by now got a name for favoring its partisans out of turn and through extra normal channels.} The electronic media—Radio and T.V—were government controlled. But all main parties got access to them according to a predetermined schedule arrived at by the main parties.\footnote{56}{On November 29, 1976 the main political parties – I.P, the MMM, the UDM, and the PMSD entered into this agreement for election broadcast. The election broadcast went on air from 4th of December to 29 December 1976. According to this agreement there was to be a time unit each for 5 minutes. Different parties were given different units. The Labour part had the privilege of opening and closing the broadcast. In these broadcast parties used to out line their future policies, foreign policies and criticisms of other parties. The IP had 29 units, the PMSD-20, the MMM-16, the UDM-16, the the IFB-9, the PSP-4, the MMSP-4 and the Parti du Sud-2.} 

**Programmes and Tactics**

All the important parties presented their detailed programmes. Socio-economic issues occupied the primary importance. The size of the MMM as an opposition added an ideological perspective to foreign policy and individual or institutional freedom and liberty. The constitutional question was limited to the issue of converting Mauritius into a republic. The IP made an occasional and passing reference to socialism without using it as tool for social analysis. For the PMSD, the issue was mainly defence
of democracy and democratic norms. The MMM, on the other hand, used Marxism to analyse the situation in Mauritius. Its class analysis was not based on Marxist theoretical postulates, since it rejected any association with East Block socialism. It was opposed to centralised or state socialism. It was the third path (‘troisième voie’) between capitalism and totalitarian Marxist states that it advocated by reference to the debates on Marxism in Chili and Portugal.

On economic issue, the debates covered the future structural and organisational policies, on production and distribution. On the issue of nationalisation different parties took contrasting stands. The MMM was for nationalising important sectors of the economy for establishing a "Sugar Authority" with power to regulate all aspects of sugar production which was monopolised by the White planters. It wanted state agencies to take up import and distribution along with overwhelming predominance

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57 According the MMM, Mauritius had two main classes, the owning and the deprived. The latter was further having two divisions - the mass of labourers and small and middle bourgeoisie. It distinguished between position of a person in a class (élément objectif) and perceived situation of a person in class (position de classe).

58 It was for nationalising five of 21 sugar estates and factories. One Rosebelle had been already nationalised in 1973. It wanted total nationalisation of transport sector, of docks and insurance companies, 51 percent government share in all main hotels and construction enterprises. With nationalisation it wanted to introduce modernisation and the system of participation of workers in management.
of state financial institutions and banks in the national economy.\textsuperscript{59}

In contrast the PMSD wanted to leave the market forces under a vigilant state authority. The Independence Party, on the other hand, was not opposed to nationalisation in principle but it called for selective nationalisation.\textsuperscript{60}

On agriculture, no party wanted a fall in sugar production, but asked for gradually liberating land for diversification. Here the MMM took a solitary stand on checking the growth of tea cultivation because its sole outlet was South Africa and the Apartheid regime.

On industrialisation also there was a divergence of views. All parties were for rapid industrialisation, but the PMSD was for a policy of 'free Zone' enterprise to be established with the help of foreign capital and for exporting products to Europe and developed countries. The MMM stood for 'real' industrialisation by diversifying

\textsuperscript{59} The MMM had a time frame and transitory arrangements to effect these changes. In the first five years of power, the MMM was to have a "Confictual working arrangement" in economy between government and private sectors. During which the private sectors were to be phased out and they had not to have any illusion about their ultimate fate. During this five years, though government was not going to attain total transformation on this count but it intended to give proof of increasing employment opportunity, of controlling price and inflation and of putting the state revenue in order.

\textsuperscript{60} It had already nationalised Rosebelle sugar factory and Electricity Board. It was for paying adequate compensation on nationalisation which was to increase the public debt.
agriculture and geared for internal demand and trade opportunities with third world countries. All parties assured increased salary to workers in the sugar industry. Similarly, on tourism its effects on local culture became a sensitive issue. The PMSD was for fast growth of tourist sector. The MMM opposed its uncontrolled growth and primarily the growth of tourist from South Africa. The Independence party did not take a categorical stand on either. It rather emphasised the social aspect of development - an area where it counted its achievement in office. Among the social issues education was the most important. The access to college and university education was not free and was interpreted as the main barrier against social mobility. The MMM promised free college and university education. But on 9th December, Ramgoolam also announced his party decision to free education which the press took as an 'election bomb. The focus was now on medium of instruction—Creole, French, English or all three? The MMM was for Mauritianisation of education in content and examination, but it wanted increasing access

61 In Mauritius secondary schools are called colleges. University of Mauritius did not have graduation courses in social science and humanities. However it had a department of agriculture.

62 The question paper and supervision of secondary school examination was done by English institutions and answer sheets were examined in Britain.
to knowledge in French and English.\textsuperscript{63} The PMSD was for maintaining international standard of secondary school examinations and for retaining the control of British and French institutions on such examinations. It opposed the introduction of Creole as official language which the MMM was advocating. Evading the above issues Independence party emphasised on technical education, establishment of industries, encouragement to research and foundation of 'Air college' etc.\textsuperscript{64}

The major political debate was on foreign policies. Duval's pro-West orientation had brought about a rapture between the PMSD and the Labour party. Ramgoolam's bid to host the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit, also created divisions (See Chapter III).\textsuperscript{65} The MMM demanded a

\textsuperscript{63} Dev Virahsawmy who was the founder member of the MMM was instrumental in taking the MMM a categorical stand on adoption of creole in place of French and English. He had done his Ph.D. thesis on Mauritius Creole in an European University and was strongly advocating for its adoption. But by now he had formed a separate party MMMSP.

\textsuperscript{64} Other social issues were social security and hospitals. Hospital services in Mauritius were free but due to meager resource allocation, quality of service was very poor. As a result contrast between government and privat owned hospitals was very sharp. There was no provision for medical insurance. The Independence Party said it would remodell the health service on the British pattern, without touching the private health services. It promised to establis a commission to examine the provisions on social security. But none of the parties categorically promised to provide social security and medical insurance facilities. There were other issues like housing, transport, pension old age allowance, etc. which formed theme of the electoral campaign.

\textsuperscript{65} The PMSD asked for a pro-West policy because Mauritius needed Common European Market for its current and future exports. It wanted Mauritius to be guided by economic realism, and not to be carried by rhetoric. It said Mauritius with economic development could become "Switzerland of Indian Ocean" by becoming generally neutral- and by not becoming aggressvely Non-Aligned 'which meant in fact that it was aligned.'
break of all connections with South Africa return of Diego Garcia to Mauritius and a leading role in the Non-Aligned Movement and OAU. It also wanted a complete demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean This gave other parties a chance to brand the MMM as Moscow stooge. But the MMM had came out with a list of civil and institutional liberties to distance itself from Eastern Block.

Election took place on Monday, 20 December 1976. It was peaceful and without any manipulation. The turn-over was around 90 percent. All parties accepted the electoral verdict though a recounting ordered in some constituencies. The MMM emerged as largest single party. IP was able to contain its defeat but the PMSD suffered a severe reverse (see Graph No. 13, 14 and 15).

Besides the three main parties, all other parties together got 4.28 percent of votes without any seat. Small parties were swept away and no one received even 2 percent of vote cast. They played only negative role in some constituencies where it modified the results of three main parties. The Independent Forward Block which had 12 seats in 1967, had fielded 30 candidates. In certain constituencies it was supported by the PMSD but it did not get more than a total of 20,000 votes.

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66 Out of a total of 1,174,665 votes cast (number of voters multiplied by three), The three principal parties got 1,102,283 votes.

67 In the constituency no - 9 (Flacq/Bon Accueil) votes obtained by Parti Socialiste du Peuple contributed to the defeat of the IP candidate which split the vote of IP. Similarly in constituency no.-20, votes acquired by the UDM led to PMSD defeat. So was the MMMSP votes in Quatre Bornes responsible for defeat of the MMM. All these smaller parties cut votes from the vote bank of major parties leading to their defeats.
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1976
(Results: Seat Wise)
GENERAL ELECTIONS: 1976
(Parties: Percentage of Votes)

(Based on Gazette of 1976)
GENERAL ELECTIONS: 1976
(Parties: Percentage of Votes)

(Based on Gazette of 1976)
Ethnic Composition of Mauritian Assembly (1977)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>PMSD</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>MMM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creoles</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franco-Mauritian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voting Pattern

Like previous elections, caste, religion and ethnicity played a significant role in this elections but these factors alone can not explain the results. It was from this time onwards that political ideology started playing a significant role. People in many constituencies voted on party lines though their ethnic preferences can also be discerned. Eleven out of twenty one constituencies voted for three candidates belonging to the same party irrespective of ethnic consideration. This was so in five constituencies for the MMM, four constituencies for the Independence party and two for the PMSD. In ten constituencies people voted for candidates belonging to the same ethnic group (all Hindus) regardless of the party.

Old Hindu voters more or less remained loyal to the Independence Party but many of the newer Hindu voters went to the MMM. Tamils voted in favour of the MMM. A majority of Muslim voters did not side with Razack and supported the MMM. Among Creoles the richer section remained with the PMSD, the idealist and the poor which formed a
majority voted for the MMM. Some 80,000 young voters around 18 years of age who were inducted into electoral roll refused allegiance to the Labour Party. They were influenced by the ideological stance of the MMM. Which had promised a fair and just society with equality of opportunity based on personal achievement rather than on ethnicity and caste labelling. *Le Militant*, a newspaper of the MMM wrote,

"The MMM victory is more formidable in that the party has succeeded in defeating the poisonous campaign of lies, insults and slanders led by fascist coalition of the Labour, CAM and the PMSD. It is victory for Mauritians against communalism. The MMM victory is proof of the support it has received from the cross-section of the Mauritian people and it has achieved this by breaking the monopoly of Labour Party, CAM and P.M.S.D. in both rural and urban areas".  

**THE 1982 ELECTIONS**

The PMSD and IP alliance with a bare majority of two lasted for five years term. Defection was the most important factor to provide political stability during this period. The Labour Party suffered a major split with formation of the PSM. The MMM entered into an alliance with the PSM. Further, the MMMSP had rejoined the MMM. The PMSD left the coalition only one year before the election, but all its members in ministry.

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68 Quoted in Mannick, n.26, p.151.

refused to part with the government when Duval decided to breakup the coalition in 1982.

To get the minority vote the Labour Party made alliance with Parti Mauricien and Rassemblement Progrès et Liberté(RPL). Parti Mauricien was a new party made of 5 to 8 parliamentarians of the PMSD in the last parliament. All these five became ministers.\(^70\)

The MMM had already toned down its ideological campaign over last five years. Its ideology was "Pour un socialisme à visage Mauricien" (for a socialism with Mauritian face)\(^71\) It had compromised with ethnic forces and concluded an alliance with PSM to assure Hindus in the case of an MMM government. Jugnauth openly accepted this role of the PSM in the MMM-PSM alliance.\(^72\) The projection of Jugnauth as number one in the MMM government was also a ploy to mute the criticism that the MMM was anti-Hindu.

Unlike in 1976 election where India was non-existent in MMM campaign, in 1982 election Indian blessings to the MMM-PSM government was a publicized theme.

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\(^70\) When Duval decided to break its coalition with the Labour in 1981, all the PMSD members in ministry led by Eliezer François (Minister of Housing, Land and Town planning) decided to stay back in the government. This break away group was known as François group.

\(^71\) See, *Le Nouveau Militant* 1st may 82.

\(^72\) Appreciating the contribution and role of PSM in MMM-PSM alliance, Jugnauth said in an interview to *Le Militant* that PSM had a decisive contribution to make in victory of alliance. He said, "l y avait face au MMM, un certain reticence, surtout dans la commune hindous. Sous ce rapport le presence et l'action du PSM dans la presente alliance est un autour majeur. *Le Mauricien* 27 May 1982
Jugnauth and Berenger had gone to New Delhi and had personal meetings with Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Foreign minister Vasant Sathe (see Chapter IV)\(^73\) There was no secret that the Indian High Commissioner in Port Louis had conveyed that New Delhi was not too happy with Ramgoolam.\(^74\) MMM’s proclaimed third world policy, adherence to non-aligned movement and demand for demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean coincided with the Indian foreign policy.

The tactics of the MMM-PSM was to denounce and expose the inefficiency and failures of the government. It denounced the use of American mercenaries by the National Alliance party for electoral campaign.\(^75\) Its public meeting organised at various places attracted unprecedented crowds. The wave in favour of the MMM was such that its supporters celebrated victory (fini gagné) much before the elections. Jugnauth was hoping to get around 45 out of 62 seats.\(^76\)

The MMM theme was vote for ‘A new team for a new Mauritius’ (une nouvelle équipe pour une ile Maurice Nouvelle). Its slogan was "Kí nou Oulé ?" (What do we want?) -- changement!! (change).

\(^73\) See, *Le Mauricien* 20 July 1981, which had given coverage to 40 minutes talk between Berenger and Mrs. Gandhi.

\(^74\) Ramgoolam’s pro-West policy was not resonance with India’s foreign policy of non-alignment and demanding the creation of Indian Ocean peace zone.

\(^75\) See, "Enn nuosimé, enn nuro lavi" Oodiah, p.120.

\(^76\) Ibid p.122.
National Alliance Party (NAP) and the PMSD, on the other hand, were overshadowed by the MMM campaign. Whereas the MMM was attracting 50,000 strong crowd, the Labour Party had difficulty in gathering even 3,000 people to celebrate its 46th anniversary in Port Louis.

The media played the same active role as it had played in 1976. Opposition and government were allowed time slot on the radio and television. Dailies were important tool of campaign for political parties. The more neutral papers, L'Express and Le Mauricien and Week-End projected the impression, based on their local sample polls that MMM-PSM was going to sweep the poll.

The election was held on Friday 11 June 1982. Like 1976, over 90 percent of voters turned out. The result was a tidal wave. MMM-PSM alliance swept all the 60 seats. The result was unprecedented in a third world country where a single party under multi-party political system won all the seats (see Graph No. 17, 18 and 19) For the first time the election system had worked against Ramgoolam.

The 'best looser' system, which had visualized so many possibilities in election results, also failed to visualise this possibility. There was a controversy in allocation of 'best looser' seats and the Election Supervisory Commission responsible for allocation

77 Under proportional system he could have got 16 seats this time.
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1982
(Results: Seat Wise)
GENERAL ELECTIONS: 1982
(Parties: Percentage of Votes)

Constituencies ->

- lp/RPL/GF
- MMM/PSM
- PMSD

T = National Total
(Based on Gazette of 1982)
GENERAL ELECTIONS: 1982
(Parties: Percentage of Votes)

Constituencies →

LP/RPL/GF  MMM/PSM  PMSD

T = National Total
(Based on Gazette of 1982)
decided not to allocate any seat to any one.\textsuperscript{78} However, the Supreme Court intervened and allocated four best looser seats the PMSD got two (Gaetan Duval and Nicol Francois) and the Labour Party two (Glover and Mrs. S. F. Roussey).\textsuperscript{79} Gaetan Duval became leader of opposition.

\textbf{THE BREAK UP: AND ELECTIONS OF 1983}

Within six months of 1982 election, internal divisions within the MMM came to the open. A group of the MMM objected to many financial measures of P. Berenger (Chapter V) It was also felt that Berenger was trying to dictate and tame Prime Minister Jugnauth. Boodhoo, of PSM opposed Berenger's move to expel him from the alliance. Jugnauth was not inclined to expel him nor did he accept the thesis that PSM had turned communal after the victory of the MMM-PSM alliance. The economic measures of Berenger, the leadership tussles and the groupism within the alliance on the expulsion of the PSM from the government, re-sensitized ethnic feelings. Jugnauth-PSM faction of alliance was reduced to minority when after 9 months in government, Berenger went into opposition. Hence Jugnauth-Boodhoo group announced the dissolution of Parliament on 17 June 1983. Elections were to be held on 22 August 1983. This time election were fought on undeclared issues.

\textsuperscript{78} The Commission was of the opinion that 'there was sufficient representation of the ethnic groups as required by the constitution.

\textsuperscript{79} These four defeated candidates had received between 37 to 29 percent of votes and there was huge demonstration outside parliament against the induction of these unpopular candidates through a communal constitutional provision.
The MSM was to contest 35 seats and the Labour Party 16
The PMSD was given four constituencies,\textsuperscript{80} besides 2 seats of Rodrigue. Out of 4 Constituencies, having 12 seats, it accepted 3 candidates of the Labour Party.
Thirty three parties registered themselves for election, including the alliance of MSM and MLP. The name and varieties of parties shows the pluralistic feature of Mauritian society.

\textbf{Parties Registered for 1983 Elections}

1. Alliance of MSM and Labour Party
2. Mouvement Socialiste Militant United Party
3. Mouvement Militant Mauricien
4. Parti Mauricien Social-Démocrate
5. Goupement Progressiste
6. Communist Party of Mauritius
7. Fr\^{e}nch de Lib\^{e}ration National
8. Mauritius Liberal Party
9. Mouvement Libéral Mauricienne Mauricien
10. Lalit
11. Independant Forward Block Mauricienne
12. Union Démocratique Mauricienne
13. Mauritius Labour Party
14. Groupenement Mauricien
15. Parti Populo Mauricien
16. Forces Vives Mauriciennes
17. Parti Marxiste- Leniniste Mauricien
18. Dravidian United Party
19. Organisation Militante des Travailleurs

\textsuperscript{80}Port Louis West/GRNO, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, Rose Hill/Staneley and Curepipe/Midland.
20. Mouvement de Gauche Unifiee
21. Vaish Sabha of Mauritius
22. Mauritius Muslim Rights
23. Front Mauricien Independent
24. Parti Ouvrier Progressiste
25. Mouvement Democratique Mauricien
26. Parti National Mauricien
27. Union socialiste Mauricienne
28. Organisation for Mahatma Gandhi Object
29. Northern Tamil Council
30. Parti Travailiste Socialiste
31. Mouvement Hindou Mauricien
32. Parti Socialiste du Sud
33. Parti Socialiste du Sud

Harish Boodhoo, as campaign manager of the MSM-LP alliance, launched a 'hate Berenger' campaign of socio-economic issue or ideology was not primary. Dev Virahsawmy\textsuperscript{81}, one of the trio who had founded the MMM, launched a scathing attack on the MMM. Supporting the alliance he said "it was to check the road of dictatorship and rise of reactionary forces."\textsuperscript{82} He said, 'Avec une victoire du MMM ce sera le retour à l'esclavage' and "Il faut barrer le route au fascisme" ("With victory of MMM it will be return of age of slavery" and "It is

\textsuperscript{81} Dev Virahsawmy had left the MMM charging it to be non-leftist and had formed MMMSP. Some time earlier he had rejoined the MMM.

\textsuperscript{82} See, "P.Berenger : La cible" Oodiah, n.69, P.150.
necessary to check the emergence of facism")\textsuperscript{83} He charged that Berenger was an agent of the capitalist saying "political power must not go to the hands of those who were having economic power".\textsuperscript{84} Ramgoolam reminded Mauritians of Guiana where the majority community (the East Indians) lost power.

He warned the lower castes Hindus that "Today, to those of you who belong to certain castes they (MMM leaders) are going to make some promises. Remember at the time of concluding an alliance with the PSM he (Berenger) had said, 'Parole donnée, parole Sacrée'(Word given, is a sacred word) and you know

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84} "Paul Berenger est au service des grands possédants, il ne faut pas que le pouvoir politique soit dans le main de ce qui possèdent le pouvoir economique", Ibid.
what happened after that. When they tried to suppress your culture, were they interested to know whether you were Rajput or Raviveda? 85

The alliance said that Berenger was in the camp of South Africa. It made much publicity of the sales of two hotels, Touessrok and Le Pirogue, with majority Mauritians shares to a South African firm when Berenger was the Finance Minister.

There were incidents during campaign when Hindu candidates of the MMM were harassed by supporters of the alliance. 86 Besides the main 'hate Berenger' campaign the alliance came out with its programmes on socio economic issues as well. 87

Against its 1982 slogan of 'Changement' (change), MMM's new slogan was 'vrai changement' (real change). It decided to put up Berenger as Prime Minister.

85 Rajput in Mauritius are not what is Rajput in India. They are not kshatriyas of India but Dusadh from Bihar which is a scheduled caste in India. Raviveda are what is Chamar, a 'shose maker' again a scheduled caste in India. Oodiah, n.69, p.152.

86 On Monday 9th August, when three MMM candidate of constituency no. 11 were coming back after a meeting addressed by Vidula Nababsing, they were chased near Quatre Bornes by a crowd loaded with arms. Many of the supporters of the MMM were injured though the candidates were saved by a villager.

87 It made promised of combating unemployment, check debt-servicing which was claiming major share of foreign exchange and check tax evasion. Further it promised to nationalise five sugar factories, promote tourist industries, diversify agricultural production, to strengthen Non-align Movement--, and take back Diego Garcia from Britain. It promised to open the country not only to the West but also to Eastern Europe and Scandinavian countries and to strengthen its relation with Canada and Australia. (See Week-End 10 July 83) It promised a "Programmatic Socialism" with the emphasis on economic growth and generate employment. Besides nationalisation of five sugar factories it also promised nationalisation of 20,000 arpents of land and nationalisation of Air Mauritius, See Week-End 17th July 83.
The personal appeal of Berenger, which was based on his identification with socio-economic change, had little appeal. Calling the anti-MMM alliance as "L'alliance de la haine contre un seul homme" (alliance of hate against one person), it denounced the communal campaign. J.C. de L'Estrac, campaign manager of the MMM presented 'L'histoire d'un combat' (History of struggle). In which Berenger was presented as the leader of 14 years of the struggle and therefore deserved the future Prime Ministership.88

In this election programmes of the two opposing groups had a broader convergence, less in details but more in their approach to major issues and problems. The MMM in its programme promised to 'pursue and consolidate economic growth' in order to tackle the problems of unemployment. It was to impose 'land tax' and 'capital gains-tax' on the affluent landed section. Further it proposed greater control over the economy, the monopolist and the black economy.

It denounced the MSM and the PSM for their betrayal to the MMM.89 It asked voters "to vote against the traitors, and communalist lie and polemics... we ask Mauritian people to vote for team which continued the struggle started in 1969 for liberty and dignity of labour, for developing

88 L'Estrac said " votre accueil est celui de la reconnaissance à un militant, le premier des militants, un lutteur... qui est celui qui est le premier à être agressé, a subir la repression, a aller en prison, le premier pour faire le grève de la faim, pour recevoir les bulles? L'heure est arrivée pour qu'il devienne le premier ministre de ce pays!" See, Oodiah, n.69, P.152.

89 See, Week-End 31 July, 1983.
economy of country and socialism...."\(^90\) It warned people against excessive number of leaders and its incoherent nature of alliances.

The alliance also emphasised "the cohesion of the team which would come to lead the country, with elements of competence which they had already proved because they already had the professional and ministerial responsibility"\(^91\) Jugnauth declared that the leader of the MMM is 'a crook' 'a liar', and hungary for power.\(^92\)

The PMSD was not formally a part of the alliance. It had only electoral adjustment with the MSM-LP against the MMM. It issued its own manifesto. It repeated the same theme as the other two, but it still worded its manifesto on the old approach. The election was charged with communal feelings. The slogan of class struggle, change and socialism made no impact on Hindu voters.

There was a flood of foreign money in the island "According to rough but accurate estimate (sic) US $ 200 million is circulating in the country. This would mean a world record of $ US 400 being spread per voter"\(^93\). Such money came through various sources. There was also allegation of Indian money coming from

\(^{90}\) \textit{Week-End} 21st August 1983.

\(^{91}\) \textit{Week-End} 21st August 1983.

\(^{92}\) See, \textit{Week-End} 21 August 1983 and Oodiah, n.69, p.148.

\(^{93}\) Hari Sharan Chhabra, \textit{Times of India}(New Delhi) 3rd August 83.
RSS sources. The MMM protested against interference of 'some foreign diplomats in electoral campaign'. Indian Sadhus and religious preachers were very active during the campaign asking Hindus to remain united.

Berenger who had been preferred by India in 1982 election was no longer favoured by the Indian mission. The election eve was full of planted rumors. Many Mauritian still narrates how they had definite informations that if the alliance won Berenger would capture power with the help of foreign mercineries who were kept ready in neighbouring countries.

Whatever might be the truth, but the Hindus were been given firm assurance by India against such eventuality. They were given the impression that this was last chance of keeping power in the hands of Hindus. There was no alternative to the alliance in such a situation. Results: The Alliance got majority. Berenger, the architect of 62-0 victory of 1982

94 ibid

95 "Le raisons d'une défaite" Oodiah n.69, p.54.

96 Based on interviews, October 1990.

97 Many MSM activist of the alliance very categorically asserted the information (asking me to verify from the Indian Mission if I did not believe them) that Jugnauth had informed Indian Mission about this threat. Indian government had accordingly kept 10,000 of its combat troops ready to fly any movement. After the election result, two or three suspicious planes were seen circling over the island and India had alerted its troops twice for boarding the plane. But finally the planes did not land up. Indian Mission in Mauritius when contacted refused to comment.
lost. Like 1967, the Hindu backed alliance got all the 30 rural seats. All the 19 seats of the MMM were in the urban areas of Port Louis and Plaines Wilhems districts (see Graph .... for results and comparison with the 1967 election). Regionally in Port Louis the MMM got around 60 percent of votes and the alliance only around 39 percent. In constituency no 3 of Port Louis, the MMM got more than 83 percent of votes. In the second urban district of Plaines Wilhems which had 6 constituencies alliance got 52 percent and MMM got 42 percent. But because of the presence of the PMSD in the alliance the MMM could get only 5 seats (3 in Stanely- Rose Hill (19) and two in Beau Bassin/P. Rivière (20)) The alliance got highest number of votes in the northern rural constituencies (5, 6 and 7) averaging around 61 percent and the MMM only 37 percent. But in other rural regions the MMM put up a better fight. From the eight best looser seats three went to the MMM, two each to MSM and the Labour Party and one to the PMSD. The alliance ended up with 46 seats and the MMM-OPR with 24 seats.

98 Berenger lost by a very small margin of 34 votes in constituency no.-8. However he entered the parliament through the 'best looser system' - the communal system which the MMM was strongly opposing in 1982. The MMM justified its entry through best looser system on the ground that despite having 46 percent of vote it had got only 19 seats and therefore the MMM was under-represented. See, "La raisons d'une defaite" by Oodiah, n.69, p.153.

99 See Graph no. 23, 23A.

100 In the East (8, 9 and 10) on an average the MMM got 41.8 percent, in the south (11, 12 and 13) it got 42.6 percent and in the West (14) it received 46.8 percent. See Appendix.
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1983
(Results : Seat Wise)

Constituencies-->

(MSM/LP)  (MMM)  (PMSD)  (OPR)
GENERAL ELECTIONS: 1983
(Parties: Percentage of Votes)

Constituencies →

MSM/LP/PMSD  MMM  OTHERS

T = National Total
(Based on Gazette of 1983)
GENERAL ELECTIONS: 1983
(Parties: Percentage of Votes)

Percentage

Constituencies ->

- MSM/LP/PMSD
- MMM
- OTHERS

T = National Total
(Based on Gazette of 1983)
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1967
(Results: Seat Wise)

No of Seats

Constituencies -->

(I.P.) (PMSD)

GENERAL ELECTION OF 1983
(Results: Seat Wise)

Seats

Constituencies -->

(MSM/LP) (MMM) (PMSD) (OPR)

264D
The fielding of candidate and voting pattern was reminiscent of 1967 elections when communal considerations were the most important factor. With exception of Kadher Bhayat at Montagne Blanche all the alliance candidates in rural constituency were Hindus drawn from various cast groups. A community wise examination of constituencies, shows that in many urban constituencies (Petite Riviere/Bassin) Creoles voted for Creole candidates. Similarly, in Caverne/Phoenix, Muslims voted for two Muslims candidates - one for the MMM and other for the MSM. The large Muslim population of the capital with the support of Creole and lower caste Hindus returned all the 12 candidates of the MMM. The defeat of the MMM in the Plaines Wilhems (it got only 5 seats) was because of the PMSD presence. The middle class Creole this time supported the PMSD.

THE 1987 ELECTIONS

The next general election was scheduled in 1988, but alliance could not last till then. Boodhoo had serious deferences with the MMM and was expelled. The PMSD leadership was repeatedly alleged to be involved in drug trafficking. Jugnauth was shaken by arrest of four ruling party MPs at Amsterdam for carrying drugs (see Chapter IV). The Labour Party had already split. and expelled MPs of the party formed Rassemblement des Travailleurs Mauriciens (RTM) led by Ghurburren. A group of the Labour party led by Anil Baichoo formed a separate political party Mouvement Travailliste Democrate (MTD). This group went with the MMM. Boolell again came back to the fold of
the MSM but this did not save the Jugnauth government. The government had been reduced to a minority; hence Jugnauth had to announce election for 30th August 1987.\textsuperscript{101}

Political forces aligned round two main axes. The Alliance of the MSM comprised Mauritius Labour Party (MLP), the RTM and the PMSD. The Union, led by the MMM, included the MTD of Anil Baichoo and Front Des Travailleurs Socialist (FTS), a party representing the under-privileged urban community. The FTS was being led by Sylvo Michel. The Union presented Prem Nababsing as the future Prime Minister and P. Berenger president of the eventual republic.

The Alliance took the achievement of ‘economic miracle’ during its rule as the central point of its campaign. It countered the Union by slogan "La moralité ne remplit pas le ventre" (The morality does not fill the stomach). In its election manifesto, the Alliance emphasised the economic boom initiated since 1983. In its manifesto ‘Towards the year 2000’ it listed the achievements of its government at four crucial fronts which were going to be problematic in

\textsuperscript{101} When the election was announced and Boundary Commission started its work, MMM submitted a memorandum to the latter giving its reservations. The concern of the MMM was that the demarcation should not in any way crack the national unity. The MMM was apprehensive that the demarcation of the boundaries could be done in a way that constituencies where the opposition supporters are marginally ahead of in electoral strength, a near by area with government supporter population would be added. This could offset the majority position of the opposition in the constituency. Similarly, areas with the opposition stronghold could be merged with the constituencies which had very large electoral support for opposition. The government could either reject or accept the recommendations of the commission but it could not change that.
the future as well. Secondly, the gains of economic growth had been utilised to generate employment opportunities. It had sharply reduced unemployment problem.\footnote{102} Thirdly, the government had given protection to the most vulnerable sections of the society and fourthly, it had democratised the economy where non-traditional business and commercial sectors could develop without suppressing the traditional one. All these assertions were supported by the economic figures which spoke for themselves.\footnote{103}

For its campaign, the Alliance was parading Jugnauth, Boolell, Duval, the Finance Minister, Lutchmeenaraidoo - responsible for the economic boom. The campaign manager of the last general election, Harish Boodhoo, was out of the alliance.\footnote{104}

\footnote{102}{For details and sector wise analysis see, K. S. Ramachandran, "Mauritius Boons", \textit{Financial Express} (Bombay), 31st August, 1987.}

\footnote{103}{First in the last ten years a surplus balance of payment (MR. 1,716 million in 1986), a steep rise in foreign exchange reserve from MR.392m in 1983 to MR.1,800m in 1986. Investment rose from 3.2 percent of the GDP in 1983 to 17.6 percent in 1986. Similarly saving rose from 17.1 percent in 1983 to 24.5 percent in 1986. Though bulk of the jobs were created in the low wage sector of the EPZ, some 10,000 jobs were generated in the fast growing small enterprises.}

\footnote{104}{In the two groups of political parties that had come up, Boodhoo had little choice. He had emerged as one who championed the Hindu cause, so found it hard to go in arms of Berenger. Jugnauth had chucked him out of power and the office. He was isolated as an odd man. He wanted to take revenge from Jugnauth by dividing the Hindu votes. But Mauritius never had a place for a small party. To avoid the division of the Hindu votes (\textit{Hindustan Times}; New Delhi, 2nd August, 1987), he announced his decision to retire from the active politics in early June 1987. Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Parishad (International Council of Cooperation), a socio-cultural organisation based in New Delhi, active in promoting the cultural interest of the overseas Hindus and in establishing their close links with India, offered Boodhoo its help to visit the land of his fore fathers.}
The Union, on the other hand, launched its attack on the moral and the ethical bankruptcy of the Alliance. It outlined five areas of immorality - drug, fraud, corruption, nepotism and sex - which characterised the regime. It charged Jugnauth of ruling on the support of drug trafficking MPs (see Chapter VI).

Besides exposing the alliance on the above counts, the Union launched a two pronged campaign to counter the thesis of economic miracle. Firstly, it propagated that it was Berenger as Finance Minister in 1982-83, who took the hard economic measures and negotiated with the World Bank and the IMF. It was as a result of, it claimed, Berenger's economic policies that Mauritius could achieve high growth rate during the last four years. Secondly, it alleged that the economic growth had been very badly distributed. It charged that it was the affluent and the capitalist who appropriated the growth and the workers and the salaried class got little benefit. It promised a steep increase in the salaries and the pensions.  

The issue of republic now got added motivation for the MMM. The post of the president could provide Berenger a post commensurate with his stature in the party. A non-executive president was not going to touch the susceptibilities of the majority community. But this time, Berenger was vague on the powers of the president.

105 Addressing a meeting on the 26th of July at Quatre Bornes, Prem Nababsing promised a 25 percent increase in the salary under 'Free Zone' and an increased minimum pay for the agricultural labourers, public sector workers and labourers in the sugar industries. Besides he promise an increase in the pension of the widows and orphans. See, 'Campagne Electorale', Oodiah, n.69, p.197.
The MSM tried to incite the Hindu community on this vagueness. It campaigned that an executive president or a powerful president who was anti-Hindu was more dangerous than one occupying the Prime Minister’s post. Berenger, hopeful of victory, on the eve of election vaguely hinted at an executive president. The next day, the Alliance press and rumours were able to fan the same sentiment against Berenger as in 1983, though it was not equally intense. Berenger did not have the time to correct it as the elections were held on the same day.

The campaign was free and intense. Ex-Finance Minister Berenger and the current finance Minister, V. Lutchmeenaraidoo appeared face to face on a television transmission propounding their views and countering others. Mauritius had 50,000 new voters on the electoral roles and the size floating votes was important. This time there was no Hindu wave but there were fear among the Hindus about the happenings in Fiji.\textsuperscript{106}

The elections were held on the basis of the constituencies with new boundaries. The turn over was higher than in 1983, especially in the rural areas where it went up to a record 95 percent.\textsuperscript{107} The Alliance won but the Union increased its score of 1983 by getting 21 seats (see Graph No. ..). Region

\textsuperscript{106} In Fiji Islands the pro-Indian government was toppled by Col. Rabuka and it started institutionalised discrimination of people of Indian origin.

\textsuperscript{107} In Souillac/Rivière des Anquilles.
wise, in rural areas, the Alliance received 10.24 percent votes more, whereas the Union received 7.17 percent higher votes in the urban areas. The Union made two dents in the rural areas. Its candidate, P. Nababsing got the highest vote in Riviere de Anguilles/Souillac and A. Ganoo got elected in Savanne/Riviere Noire. The MMM lost two seats in its earlier stronghold – one in Port Louis/Montagne Longue and the other in Vacoas/Floreal where its candidate K. Ruhee lost the election. P. Berenger lost second time successively at Belle Rose/Quatre Borne constituency. This time he failed to re-enter Parliament even by the 'best loser' system. OPR got two seats in Rodrigue. The Electoral Commission nominated eight best losers – all going to non-HIndus. Five best loser seats went to the alliance and the remaining three to the Union.

In Port Louis, the Alliance increased its share of votes by 3.7 percents compared to 1983. It got 35.4 percent. The boundary alteration of the constituency number 3 had added villages from Montagne Longue leading to the victory of one Alliance candidate. All the four Port Louis constituencies were regarded as bastions of the MMM since 1976. In the rural North having nine seats, the Alliance again won all the seats but the Union increased its margin by 6.26 percent over 1983.108

108 However, in the rural region of South and South-West, Nababsing topped the polling in Constituency No. 13. Similarly, the Secretary General of the MMM, A.Ganoo, won in the Constituency No.14. This rural region was earlier a stronghold of the Labour Party and later of the MSM. The Union increased its score as well as the share of votes in the urban districts of Plaine Wilhemes.
GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1987
(Result: Seat Wise)

Constituencies

Seats

Alliance
Union
The number of the seats shared between the Alliance and the Union was not proportional with the difference of votes they had. The Alliance, with a mere margin of 1.75 percent of the votes was able to get of 13 seats (excluding Rodrigue).\textsuperscript{109}

But this number only gave a comfortable majority to Jugnauth for the third successive government. Though the ethnic feelings were not as intense as in 1983, they were the second most important factor in favour of the alliance. The bulk of Hindus, a majority of Chinese and the middle-class Creoles, business class and bureaucrats—all by and large voted for the Alliance. The working class Creole, a near total majority of Muslims and a small section of the poorer Hindus and Tamils voted for the Union.

\textsuperscript{109} This represented a margin of 28,536 votes which in terms of votes meant 9,512 voters (each voter had three votes).
CONCLUSION

Mauritius presents a unique example of political stability in Third World. Mauritian society is divided in several segments based on ethnicity, language, religion and class. Like other African countries, decolonisation was rapid in Mauritius. Political institutions like parties, interest groups and trade unions could not get enough time to base themselves on secular ideas and policies. As such political leaders organised themselves on ethnic or communal lines - since the two became synonymous in Mauritius.

The growth of communalism, on the one hand, led to massive mobilisation of people for political participation in colonial times, but, on the other, it basically communalised politics. For independent Mauritius, it left two contradictory legacies: first politics became participatory (people turned in large number for voting, political meeting and demonstration). Secondly, communalism became entrenched in Mauritian Constitution with different political parties surviving primarily on ethnic identification.

Decolonisation pushed class forces into the background. The Mauritius Labour Party, which came to represent the working and deprived classes was not organised on Marxist Leninist ideas, nor did the British policy, as in Guiana and other colonies, encouraged the growth of class based
parties. In a colony like Mauritius, where independence was not fought for but rather imposed (Chapter II), every group wanted to gain maximum favour by increasingly aligning itself on British preferences. As a result, despite class divisions, Marxism remained alien to pre-independence Mauritius. Ethnicity emerged as the deciding factor.

The stage of growth of communalism coincided with economic stagnation and alarming rise in population. In the final decade of the British rule, Mauritius also suffered cyclones, poverty, unemployment, economic crisis and lack of emigration outlets. This turned it into, what V. S. Naipaul describes, an 'overcrowded baracoon'.

The introduction of adult suffrage in 1948, changed the power base in Mauritian society. Indo-Mauritians replaced Franco-Mauritians and Mulatto elites from power (See Chapter II). The leader of Indo-Mauritians, Ramgoolam, was a moderate and ready to pay the price for being installed in power. His negotiation for the sale of Diego Garcia to U.K. was instrumental in devising a constitution and electoral system suited to the Indo-Mauritians. Since Ramgoolam’s political and electoral base was Hindu community, the predominance of this community was also entranchcd in the electoral system. When a similar percentage of East Indians (51%) in the British Guiana aligned itself with Chhedi Jagan having communist leanings, the British government drastically changed the constitution and the electoral system. East Indians,
thereafter, could never return to power. The British attitude of installing a favourite was strongly opposed by the non-Hindus in Mauritius but in vain. On the contrary Britain signed a defence agreement with Ramgoolam’s government to guarantee peace and to enforce the system. The failure of non-Hindus to stall these developments gave rise to frustration, disillusionment and fears especially among the most vulnerable Creole section. Thousands of Creoles left Mauritius in despair and under fear of Hindu majoritarianism.

After independence, Prime Minister Ramgoolam adopted a policy of national reconciliation and invited the Opposition to join government. This helped to minimise divisions on ethnic lines. There was a large segment of population which did not identify with either of the two main political groups- the Mauritius Labour Party and the PMSD- and this provided a fertile ground for the rise of MMM. Secondly Ramgoolam initiated large-scale welfare measures to meet the expectation of Hindus. This adhoc non-productive economic measures did not promote employment or economic growth. As a result, the economic crisis deepened and people demanded change- change of leadership, economic programmes and policies which had badly failed (See Chapter III).

Opposition to ruling coalition came from outside - the MMM. It was led by intellectuals and leaders with Marxist programmes and policies. Marxism as an alternative
political force was a new thing. Its analysis of socio-economic and political condition appealed to the population around 50% of which was below 30 years, unemployed and with insecure future.

MMM's cross-ethnic appeal got supporters from every community. Its anti-communal appeal and programme for socio-economic change obliterated the earlier consideration as to which leader comes from which community or who formed the core group in government! (See Chapter III).

Initially the MMM was led by non-Hindus - the Franco, Creoles and Tamils. Its initial support base was Creole workers in docks, who had after the 1967 election realised that they could never be a majority partner in power if ethnicity remained the main issue. But if people are mobilised on class lines and ideology, this group had a chance. They were also joined by Hindu leaders who had little chance to replace the 'old Hindu guards' but were needed by the MMM to give it a balanced inter-ethnic look.

That the MMM's initial leaders were not really marxist or opposed to Western imperialism became clear during 9 months of its rule. The Hindu leaders, like Jugnauth, who was projected and highlighted by the MMM for seeking support of Hindus was a founder member of Hindu Congress and a failed politician under the banner of IFB (See Chapter II). The slogan of 'change' came to nothing; after nine months, MMM's role showed that it was neither strong to manage ethnic pressures nor willing or capable
to effect a restructuring of the economy on radical lines. It collapsed. Ethnicity re-emerged as the deciding factor in the politics. MMM was reduced as an anti-Hindu, minority party with a Marxist garb.

Simultaneously, the economy too reached chaotic heights. Mauritius seemed to have come a full circle after 15 years of independence. Both Marxist and liberal approaches had failed. This could have led to chaos, coup or civil war. But it did not occur in Mauritius. On the contrary, despite odds in socio-political life it remained an open participatory democratic system. Ballot rather than bullet decided the issue. Ethnic riots or disruption of the socio-political system were avoided. Fear of 'Hindu' majoritarianism did not become all embracing; nor did the minority groups marginalised. They remained important at election times and in politics. This process was reflected in five general elections, held on an average of five years between 1967-87 (Chapter VI). The interplay of communalism and class in politics led to coalition and cohabitation rather than coup or revolution.

By the end of 1987 Mauritian economy grew by 1000% from what it was at the time of independence. From severe unemployment of 1970s and early '80s, it not only achieved full employment but also suffered growing labour shortage. Inflation which was more than 40% in 1980 came down to 0% by 1987. Budgetary deficit (2.8% of GDP) and debt service ratio (13% of Export) reduced sharply. Mauritius achieved
100% literacy with free education and health facilities. At the international level, it presented an uncommon example of success of IMF and World Bank prescriptions and that of cooperations between a third world country and industrialised West.

Under similar circumstances the political order of many third world countries had collapsed. Coup, Civil war and starvation followed as a rule. Aids from outside hardly yielded gave positive results. But how did politics and political processes in Mauritius manage to meet these disruptive forces and emerged successful where others failed? Why Mauritius is an uncommon example of political stability and crisis management? An answer to these questions lies in its geo-politics, political processes and culture and in party organisations.

Mauritius being an isolated island, different communities live in close juxtaposition with little opportunities to migrate. Unlike other mainland African countries, it does not have common border with others to act as bases or outlets for disgruntled groups (like Tamil Nadu to Sri Lankan Tamils). Nor does it fall in the sphere of any super or regional power with interest to maintain its influence. Secondly, Mauritius did not have indigenous or aboriginal population like Fiji. Here all groups were immigrants. Therefore, the special 'son of soil' claims at the cost of majority rule were not a destructive possibility. Geo-politics had also positive contributions. During the cold war both Washington and Moscow competed in
cultivating good relations with Mauritius. France was supportive and non interfering because of its presence in Reunion and it did not wish Mauritius to lead or encourage any movement for independence in Reunion or return of Tromelin Island in the Indian Ocean.

Ethnicity in Mauritius is not a rigid monolithic phenomenon. Each ethnic group has got multiple subdivisions. Hindus have different castes (Babuji, Babaji, Raviveda and Rajputs) different, languages (Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi) and different places of origin in India. Muslims are based on sects, Chinese on place of origins (Cantonese and Hakka) and religion (Buddhist or Catholics). The general population has more pronounced divisions based on colour (White Francos, coloured Mulato, Black Afro-Mauritian). At the same time there are many denominators which unite different sub divisions like Roman Catholic religion for general population and Chinese, Indian cultural and value system to Hindus and Muslims, minority status of Muslims, Chinese, Tamil, Marathi or lower caste Hindus. These ethnic divisions and subdivisions and common denominators make it easy for Mauritian population to achieve an equilibrium in political processes. Secondly, ethnicity in independent Mauritius has acquired a secular image. It is entrenched in the constitution and accepted as an unavoidable fact of politics. Even the MMM which came with radical slogans and programmes, used all possible
ethnic calculations in its strategy and conceded places in party organisation and leadership. An overt acceptance and adjustment to it had enabled the system to undermine and avoid disruptive influence on politics. Thirdly, Mauritius has used its ethnic diversities in international relation which enables it to get aid, diplomatic and security support for its system. For French aid the presence of Francos, the Roman Catholics and French language is an important consideration as is proximity of Reunion to Mauritius. This affinity gained Mauritius admission to Lome' Convention, EEC and in Francophone organisations. The same went for China for the Chinese communities but at a relatively modest scale. The Hindus looked to India for cultural strength and political rights. During decolonisation and even during the 1983 election, when there was a threat to their hold on power, they looked towards India.

Class division in Mauritius was clear. A tiny population of Francos owned most sugar factories and big estates and was economically affluent to others in comparision. However, this class division was neutralised by the dominance of ethnicity which made it imperative for the General population and other groups to check the "peril of Hindu domination". As a result class forces were undermined by ethnic forces. But even when the MMM came on the basis of class struggle why did it not proceed to annihilate the land owning class? This was because economic and political power was in the hands of two
different groups. When the sugar barons accepted the inevitability of political power going to Hindus, the later also accepted the indispensability of economic magnates who had strong links with West. If power in the hands of a majority was a must for avoiding civil disturbances, the money, skill and Western aid were vital for the survival for Mauritius as a nation. Both accepted the strength of the other.

In post-1983 politics even the MMM accepted this dicotomy. Under MSM rule political power ensured stability and order and diplomatic support for these sugar barons; and the later invested its capital and skill in Mauritius without aspiring for political power.

Given these historical, geo-political, social and economic settings how have the political forces operated in Mauritius? How far political structure and processes were shaped by its surroundings and how they succeeded in meeting the task of conflict resolutions, providing political stability and participatory democracy? To answer we have to examine the political parties and more importantly the political culture of Mauritius.

In Mauritius all main political parties have ethnic base, but some like MLP and MMM come with secular ideology intending to base themselves on cross-ethnic support. Labour ended up as a party of Hindus whereas MMM became a party of minorities -- having Muslim and Black Creoles as core groups. Some other like PMSD, IFB, PSM started by
basing themselves on ethnic support. Therefore, each group has organised group to represent its interest in political processes. Another fact is that all parties are led by middle class people, most of whom are professionals (Lawyer, school teacher or doctor). The professional and urban middle class is socially, economically and numerically strong in Mauritius. It is this class which is most influential and provides political leadership.

The Constitution and electoral system provide a structural framework where the risk of sudden changes is limited. The continuity of Hindu predominance in power is ensured while at the same time the constitution provides a 'best looser' corrective system which enlist the support of other communities in political processes. To prove this point one has to examine the evolution of electoral system during the phase of decolonisation. Given the geographical spread and smaller area of island, forty electoral constituencies were introduced for 1959 and 1963 elections. This was later reduced to 20 which gave as in earlier times, seats to different communities in Parliament, close to their percentage of total population. Since 1963, ethnic factor has become decisive. Out of 40 constituencies, in a communalised election, the geographic spread of Hindus enabled it to return 26 candidates from tickets of Hindu based party (MLP+IFB) and 14 from party representing non-Hindus. It gave Hindu based party a majority of 12 seats. The Banwell Commission reduced the constituencies by a half, demarcating in a way that could
ensure same degree of representation to all communities. In 1967 election the alliance backed by Hindus won in 13 and PMSD won in 7 constituencies. Both times ethnicity was a dominant factor. A rule by majority of six seats could have been risky for maintaining Hindus in power or for general political stability of government. The threat from split of smaller coalition partners or defection by only 3 members could have threatened both Hindu hold on power or general political stability of the country. This would have come true given the culture of defection and split in independent Mauritius. To meet this threat the electoral system provided a three member constituency which gave Hindu a majority of 18 seats in Parliament -- a fairly large number good enough to ensure political stability. Very few people could understand the severe reaction of Ramgoolam against the corrective system of Banwell Commission which had originally suggested a corrective system for parties. The proposed corrective system could have upset the margin of majority to Hindus in Parliament. Even the 'best loser' seats do not now upset this balance because the imbalance caused by first four seats given on ethnic consideration, is corrected by the next four seats on both party and community basis.

1. A.D. Simmon who worked on the pre-independence period fails to appreciate the cause of Ramgoolam's reactions and the political implication which this corrective seats implied for Hindus. She writes, "The changes were hardly substantial, but Ramgoolam able to save face, accepted them", see Modern Mauritius (Bloomington, 1982), p.17.
In this structural environment a political culture has evolved which lubricates the smooth functioning of acquisition, sharing and exercise of power. The most important feature of Mauritian culture is commitment to ballot by every community and leader. However strong dissent may be, everyone respects the electoral verdict. Secondly, Mauritius has well established political institutions. Freedom of speech, meetings, demonstrations, strikes are allowed, except during a short period of emergency. Ironically emergency was imposed by a liberal democratic coalition of Ramgoolam and PMSD. The Marxist MMM and MSM coalition did not impose emergency even in times of crisis. Institution like the press, judiciary, Parliament and elections are strong and free. Press is very developed and the government has never been able to put any effective control. On the other hand, debates through press, radio, television and public meetings are intense. All parties get access to government media like radio and television. Moreover, because of small area and population, all people who matter in politics are personally known to a wider section of population. Therefore, the awareness about the democratic institutions is strong and it is difficult to dislodge it.

Thirdly, there was ideological consensus on vital issues. The respect for constitution and democratic institutions was common to both PMSD and MLP. Their ideological perspectives differed on the strategies of development. The former favoured a capitalist path while the latter stood for a Fabian welfare state. When the MMM emerged it did not challenge the structural and institutional framework of politics. Although Marxist in ideology, it
rejected the Eastern Block or Chinese model of revolution. It stood for socialist path of development, meaning more share to the workers in management and ownership and a Third World oriented non-aligned foreign policy. Also, it stood for dissociating ethnicity from political processes. After the 1983 economic boom there was another stage when there developed a consensus on the capitalist, externally-linked, path of development. The ideological debates shifted to political morality and promotion of civil rights and good governance.

However, the most important feature of political culture was the process of coalition, bipolarisation and politics by defection. Both during the time of election and inter-election period, political parties entered into coalition with other parties having different ethnic and ideological approaches. There is no culture of political untouchability. Depending on negotiations and rapport among political leaders, any type of coalition can be expected. It is only after one succeeds in arriving at an alliance that different arguments crop up for justification.

At the time of election these alliances always got bipolar. Any third party, outside this polarisation, had little prospect in either elections, though each time more than two dozen parties outside the alliances contested. This system has enabled each community to have a group representing its interest whichever coalition may come to power.

Even in government at no point of time Mauritius had a single party regime. It had always been a coalition government. Even the MMM, with all its ideological
distaste for ethnicity, entered into alliance with the PSM of Harish Boodhoo for the same reasons (Chapter V). On the other hand, during inter-election times, stability in politics come by defection. When alliances break, most ministers of dissolving partnership stay back in the government. Defection like ethnicity has acquired a secular nature. Most MLAs and Ministers had changed side from one to another party or formed and merged parties with one another. The most outstanding stabilising role of defection was during the second Parliament (1976-82): with a mere majority of 2 seats MLP-PMSD strength of 36 as against 34 of MMM lasted for the whole five years. This happened despite the fact that PMSD parted company with the coalition in-between.

This study of Mauritian politics over the 20 years (1967-87) shows that the period enjoyed a leadership which was sensitive to other ethnic section. Even when it was revengeful, as Jagnauth was against Muslims after 1983 elections, it sooner or later made amend to appeal and accommodate all. Secondly external linkages especially France, U.K. and U.S.A. helped Mauritian economy on a competitive basis, which enabled it to meet challenges and herald economic boom. Both these achievements - in the political and economic spheres - make Mauritian democracy a uniquely successful story in a Third world plural society.
CONSTITUENCIES

1. GRNO - Port Louis West - consisting Pailles, wards 1, 2 and part of Port Louis 3.
2. Port Louis South - Consisting of parts of wards 2, 4 and 5 of Port Louis.
3. Port Louis Part (Maritime) - Port Louis East, consists of parts of 2, 4 and 5 of Port Louis.
4. Port Louis North - Montagne Longue, comprenant Congomah, Montagne Longue, Crève Coeur. and parties des wards 3 5 and 6 de Port-Louis and She Croix.
5. Pamplemousses - Troilet, Terre Rouge, Calebasses, Pamplemousses, d'Epinay, Arsenal, Morcellement St. André, Pointe aux Piments, Troilet North and south.
9. Flacq - Bon Accueil, Poste de Flacq, Poste Lafayette, Flacq, Constance, Laventure, Ecrouignard, St. Julien, Camp Ithier, Mare La Chaux, Quatre Cocos, Union Flacq, Laventure, Lalmatie, Bon Accueil.
10. Montagne Blanche - Grande Rivière south east Melrose, Médine Camp de Masque Pavée, Bel Air Rivière Sèche, Trou d'Eau Douce, Palmar, Olivia, Belle Rive, Clémencia, GRSE, Beu Champ.
11. Vieux Grand Port - Rose Belle, Quatre Soeurs, Grand Sable, Bambous Virieux, Bois des Amourettes, Rivière des Créoles, Vieux Grand Port, Bananes, Cluny, Mare Chicose, St. Hubert, Riche en Eau, Rose Belle, New Grove, Union Park, Nouvelle France, Beau Climat.
12. Mahébourg - Plaine Magnien, Bel Air South - Mahébourg, Beau Vallon, Triois Boutiques, Mare d'Albert, Plaine Magnien, Mare Tabac, Gros Bois.
15. La Caverne - Phoenix Parts of wards 1 and 2 of Vacoas, Solférino, Camp Fouquereaux, Phoenix, Highlands, Castel, La Caverne, Quinze Cantons, Hollywood.
16. Vacoas - Floréal, Parts of ward 2 and 3 of Vacoas, Curepipe Road, Henrietta, Floréal, Glen Park, La Marie, Engrais Martial.
20. Beau-Bassin - Petite Rivière, Beau Bassin, Barkly, Roches Brunes, Coromandel, Chebel, Camp Benoit, Petite Rivière, Albion, belle Vue, Camp Créoles, Gros Cailloux, Pointe aux Sables.
PARTY SEATS AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES

1. Urban Regions

(a) Port-Louis

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2. Rural Regions

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(b) Centre

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### Rodrigues

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** M.S.M./M.H.P./P.M.S.D. alliance in 1983
*** Ethnics: G.P. = General Population (Creoles), H(B) = Hindu (Bhojapuri), T&T = Tamil & Telugu, M = Muslims, C = Chinese.
### Elections of 1948

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<th>Mka/Flag (3)</th>
<th>R. du Ray/part (3)</th>
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### Elections of 1953

<p>| Jules Kernig            | S. Bissonduval    | A. Gijdhar   | S. Ragoland       | Guy Rascoent   |
| Guy Rascoent            | G. Verkatasamy    | Salam Bokell | Harilall Vighjoe  | R. Seenwawseen |
| Dr. Fragesutty          | P. Rascoent       | Veezasay Rengdo | Anath Bejachur    | Ragar Millien  |
| Dr. R. Chepenn          |                   |              |                   | A. R. Mahmed   |
| Raymond Rault           |                   |              |                   |                |
| Francis Chekien         |                   |              |                   |                |</p>
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