The Indian diaspora, spread across the seven continents of the globe, could rightly inherit the sobriquet bestowed upon the British Empire: 'where the sun never sets'.

UK AND REST OF EUROPE
Past World War II saw a demand from UK for Indian labour to run infrastructure. Big numbers came in during the 1970s after Indians were driven out. In Kenya and Uganda, which saw currency drops, Indians also came for higher education. The formidable diaspora now influences British lifestyle and cuisine. In Belgium, Indian diamond merchants are a force.

Indian labourers in the Gulf in 1980

THE GULF REGION
When oil was struck in the Gulf in the 1960s, cheap Indian labour stepped in to build infrastructure for the region. Today Indians have also secured the professional jobs and are almost one-third of U.A.E’s population. Though citizenship is not allowed, Indians can now own property.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA
Indian culture came in these countries centuries ago forming islands of Hinduism (as in Bali) and Buddhism.

SOUTHERN ASIA
Indians who first came to Mauritius in indentured labour in 1834, now constitute a majority of 70 per cent in the island. They have made it into tourist and investment haven. Fiat-successful Indian restaurants are a special feature like Shalini.

Ganga Talab of Mauritians

MAURITIUS
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Ganga Talab of Mauritians

Trinidad & Tobago

Beginning as indentured labourers in the 19th century, Indians in Trinidad & Tobago now form 43 per cent of the population and control the economy. They also excel in cricket, tax, civil services. Chateau Blanc is their contribution to culture. But Indians have problems holding on to political power.

Survivors of the first generation of migrants in T&T

SURINAME

When 432 Indians set sail from Calcutta for the Dutch colony of Suriname in 1871 as indentured labourers, they had no inkling that their descendents would, more than a century later, group to form 35 per cent of independent Suriname’s population. In time, the ‘Hindustani’ moved on to other vocations. Now the prosperous diaspora comprises professionals and political leaders too.

Edifice in Suriname commemorating 100 years of Indian emigration by sea

The Great Indian Diaspora

Canada

The Komagata Maru carrying 312 Indians was turned back but racial laws didn’t deter Indians from coming. Canada used immigration norms in 1973, leading to a huge influx of professionals. Indians now account for a quarter, 1 per cent of the total population.

Freighter Komagata Maru in Vancouver in 1914

Indian as the coxswain agent

NERs 1.5 million Rest: 564,775

Survivors of the first generation of migrants in T&T

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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