



OSSREA-Mauritius Chapter

ABOUT OSSREA

The Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) is a regional membership-based and donor-supported research and capacity-building organization whose mission is to promote dialogue and interaction between researchers and policy-makers in Eastern and Southern Africa with a view to enhancing the impact of research on policy-making and development planning. Its headquarter is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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OSSREA-Mauritius Chapter

Academic Workshop Proceedings



'Political Governance, Conflict Management and Anti-Corruption Policies'

3rd September 2012

Engineering Tower Lecture Theatre 2

University of Mauritius



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Proceedings of the Academic Workshop
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Preface

Mauritius is regularly cited as an example of political stability and democracy at both the regional and global level. The Mauritian model has, over the decades, ensured that each component of our complex socio-cultural fabric is represented at the different level of the decision-making spheres since our independence in 1968. This has contributed towards peaceful cohabitation of the different ethnic groups. The country has enhanced, over the years, its fight against corruption through socio-economic policies and legal frameworks.

Mauritius has made several attempts to rethink its political Governance framework so as to accelerate a modern and healthier nation-building process, establish a better model of representative democracy, and contribute towards the fight against corruption. It is therefore important to stimulate discussion about the way forward with regards to Political Governance in Mauritius, so as to propose measures having the potential to contribute toward the consolidation of the peaceful and stable Mauritian society through conflict management and anti-corruption strategies. This academic workshop provides academicians and researchers with the opportunity to write conference papers and present same to a wider audience. It also creates a forum for OSSREA members to engage in academic debates

The Workshop critically examines the existing political governance framework, assessing its contribution during the past 44 years in terms of conflict management, ensuring representation and fighting against corruption. It identifies the flaws of the present system and proposes alternative models or specific amendments that need to be made. An evaluation of the present Mauritian political governance framework contributes towards leveling the playing field and promoting a more enabling society given that the effectiveness of measures implemented, the lessons learnt, as well as the gaps and the challenges ahead are investigated.

<http://www.ossrea.net>

Guest Speech

Why is Electoral Reform difficult in Mauritius?



Dr Rama Sithanen

OSSREA-Mauritius Chapter was honoured by the presence and the inspirational Key-Note speech of Dr Rama Sithanen GCSK at the Academic workshop. Presently Chairman and Director, International Financial Services LTD (Mauritius), Dr Rama Sithanen was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment of Mauritius between 2005 and 2010. He was also Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Mauritius between 1991 and 1995, and has held several senior positions in the private sector as well as acted as an adviser and consultant to regional and international organisations and Governments. Furthermore, he is also a former Director of Strategy at the African Development Bank in Tunis. Dr Sithanen was Governor for Mauritius at the International Monetary Fund (1991-1995; 2005-2010) and at the World Bank (2005-2010) and Governor at the African Development Bank (1991-1995 and 2005-2010). He was leader of the Mauritius delegation at the Joint Annual IMF/WB meeting and the Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting (1991-1995; 2005-2010). He was Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of Finance of COMESA (2008-2010), leader of the Mauritius delegation and also spoke person for ACP countries during the WTO negotiation in the Green Room at Geneva in 2008 and leader of the Mauritius delegation during the AGOA negotiation in 2008 in Washington. He is currently Chairman and Director of International Financial Services, focusing on strategy, policy and business development.

He read economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science and holds a BSc with First Class Honours, and an MSc with a mark of Distinction. He has completed a PhD in Political Science from Brunel University, UK.



OSSREA-Mauritius Chapter (2012-2014)

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Assoc Prof J Chan-Low, Dean,
Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities,
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Prof S. Bunwaree, Chairperson



“Bonne Gouvernance” et Développement Constitutionnel

l’île Maurice de l’Après Guerre à l’Indépendance

Manorama Akung

Doctorante,

Université de la Réunion

INTRODUCTION: ETYMOLOGIE

L’origine et l’histoire du vocable ‘gouvernance’ sont rarement énoncées de manière unique, et diffèrent selon les auteurs, chaque entité soutenant tel ou tel forme de ce parcours.¹ Pour certains l’étymologie du mot ‘gouvernance’, qui signifiait alors la direction des baillages, remonte au XIIe siècle en France.² Mais pour d’autres, c’est Platon qui se servit du verbe grec *kubernáo* (qui voulait dire piloter un navire ou un char) de façon métaphorique dans *La République* pour la première fois, et utilisa le lexique militaire dans un cadre politique en faisant allusion au poste stratégique puissant avec des grandes responsabilités qu’occupe un pilote.³

Puis le mot est passé au XIIIe siècle, en langues anglaise, espagnole et portugaise dans un sens synonyme de gouvernement.⁴ On le retrouve ensuite en terme de droit dans l’ancien français en 1478, et il fut employé ultérieurement en 1679 au sens large de « charge de gouvernance ».⁵ Le terme de gouvernance resta dans la terminologie contemporaine à travers l’anglais, *governance*, dans le sens de management.⁶

¹Bellina Séverine, Magro Hervé, de Villemeur Violaine (2008): *La Gouvernance démocratique. Un nouveau paradigme pour le développement?* Institute de Recherche et Débat sur la Gouvernance, <http://www.institut-gouvernance.org>, p.3

²Ibid

³Charles Tournier (2007) : *Le Concept de Gouvernance en Science Politique* Pap. Polit.[online] Bogotá (Colombia), Vol. 12, No. 1, p.66

⁴Bellina Séverine (2008): op cit

⁵Ibid

⁶ Ibid



La gouvernance apparaît dans le langage international dans les années 1990, sous l’élan des institutions financières de Bretton Woods, précisément la Banque Mondiale, le Fonds Monétaire International et l’OCDE⁷ avec la formule prépondérante, et bientôt dogme, la *good governance* ou « bonne gouvernance ».⁸

Comme l’étymologie, les définitions de gouvernance sont antinomiques, et hautement polysémiques⁹ chacun le conceptualisant de sorte à arborer leur position et indiquer leur objectifs distincts.¹⁰ Selon une notion large, la

⁷Bellina Séverine (2008): op cit, p4; Charles Tournier (2007): op cit, p.70; Cvetek Nina, Daiber Friedel (2009): *Qu’est-ce que la Société Civile?* Antananarivo, KMF-CNOE [u.a.], p.19, <http://www.library.fes.de>

⁸Bellina Séverine (2008): op cit, p4; Charles Tournier (2007) : op cit,

⁹Freyss Jean: *Gouvernance Guide de cours*. Université Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne. Institut D’étude Du Développement Économique et Social. IEDES PSD option 2 2003-2004. www.institut-gouvernance.org

¹⁰Lamine Mandiang: *Reflexions Autour du Concept de Gouvernance*. Dakar, CESTI : 06-09 mai 2008 institut PANOS Afrique de l’Ouest, p.2 ; Kouider Boutaleb: *Démocratie, État de droit et bonne gouvernance en Afrique : le cas de l’Algérie*. Université Abou BekrBelkaid Tlemcen, Algérie. <http://www.francophonie-durable.org>

gouvernance indique *une manière d'aborder la question du gouvernement qui ne donne pas la priorité à l'art de gouverner et aux techniques de conduite de l'action, mais aux relations entre les dirigeants et les dirigés, notamment la société civile et l'Etat.*¹¹

Le combat contre la corruption, le népotisme et le clientélisme fonde la base essentielle de la « bonne gouvernance ». ¹² Selon cette conception, la « bonne gouvernance » est établit sur les principes gérant le respect des droits de l'homme, la démocratie, l'État de droit; la bonne administration; la responsabilité du gouvernement; la promotion des valeurs de rigueur, d'efficacité, d'équité, de probité et de transparence dans les affaires publiques; la participation des acteurs non gouvernementaux, comme des entreprises privées et la société civile.¹³

Le Contexte Historique et Politique

L'introduction de la « bonne gouvernance » ne peut se faire du jour au lendemain. Ce processus est souvent progressif et comporte des changements au niveau des usages culturels, des pratiques de longue date, des intérêts enracinés, et des normes sociales et religieuses.¹⁴ Afin de mieux comprendre l'idée d'une « bonne gouvernance » on doit en premier prendre en considération l'évolution de ce concept dans un contexte historique et politique.

¹¹Lamine Mandiang: op cit; Freyss Jean: op cit

¹²Rapport sur le développement humain (2003) - Burkina Faso - Corruption et Gouvernance Économique, UNDP, *planipolis.iiep.unesco.org*, p.38

¹³Freyss Jean: op cit; Rocha José Luis: *Quelques observations sur la gouvernance et le développement ainsi que sur les politiques d'assistance dans ces domaines par la communauté internationale : le cas de la relation ACP-UE*, <http://democratie.francophonie.org> p.1 ; Morita, Sachiko and Zaelke: *Rule of Law, Good Governance, and Sustainable Development*, Durwood Seventh International Conference on Environmental Compliance and enforcement, <http://www.inece.org/conference>, p.16; Boutaled Kouider: op cit, p.21; Dr. Moïse Modandi Wa-Komba : *Exposé sur le concept de bonne gouvernance*, UNDP, <http://www.ga.undp.org>; Bernard Antoine: Actes de la Table Ronde Préparatoire N° 3: la bonne gouvernance: objet et condition du financement, 2003 <http://democratie.francophonie.org>, p. 250

¹⁴Morita, Sachiko and Zaelke: op cit, p.16

Bien que la notion de « bonne gouvernance » soit relativement nouvelle, cette communication, qui n'est qu'une ébauche, vise à placer la bonne gouvernance à Maurice dans une perspective historique. En utilisant son contenu et les principes qui le sous-tendent, elle décrit brièvement son introduction et son évolution plus précisément dans la période charnière où l'île Maurice expérimentait son passage à une des plus importantes étapes du processus de démocratisation qu'est la genèse de sa constitution indépendante. Elle pose la question suivante: dans quelle mesure certains éléments de la bonne gouvernance furent pris en ligne de compte dans l'élaboration de la constitution de 1968? Il faut souligner que malgré les fausses notes qu'occasionnent les divers scandales 'à la Medpoint', les organisations internationales placent la République de Maurice parmi les pays réputés pour leur bonne gouvernance.¹⁵ Est-ce dû au cadre administratif, légal et politique crée par la constitution ?

Dès le début de la colonisation européenne les autorités coloniales faisaient des efforts pour améliorer la gouvernance car l'administration coloniale était gangrenée par la corruption, les malversations, les abus de pouvoir et le despotisme. Par exemple au *T'Eylandt Mauritius*, deux *opperhoofds* (commandants), GF Wreeden et IJ Lamotius, furent condamnés pour abus.¹⁶ Il y eut aussi le cas flagrant de despotisme de Deodati envers François Leguat.¹⁷ En ce qu'il s'agit de l'île de France, mémorialistes et visiteurs se disaient scandalisés par les abus et malversations. En 1784, le rapport Le Brasseur dévoile l'étendue de la fraude¹⁸ et on voit le tribunal terrier impuissant quant aux malversations dans la distribution des concessions.

Les origines de ces fléaux sont multiples. Parmi on retrouve un cadre administratif rudimentaire; l'absence de séparation entre le

¹⁵ Democracy Index Table 2010: *A Report from the Economist Intelligence Unit*. The Economist. Voir aussi CSO:GOVERNANCE STATISTICS, 2010

¹⁶ Chan Low (2001) : *La VOC, T'Eylandt Mauritius et Rodrigues*. p.56

¹⁷Ibid, p.92-93

¹⁸Saint-Elme Leduc (1844) : *Ile de France, Documents pour son Histoire civile et militaire, depuis la découverte jusqu'à la capitulation*. p. 114-119

judiciaire et l'administration; les pouvoirs des 'men on spot'; le 'get rich quick mentality'; un personnel mal rémunéré, entre autres.¹⁹ Certes avec la révolution française il y eut un certain assainissement avec la séparation du judiciaire de l'administration²⁰ mais le despotisme fut de retour avec Decaen. La conquête britannique pour sa part ne changea pas grand-chose au départ et les problèmes persistèrent au cours du 19ème et début 20ème siècle. Par exemple il y avait le cas du *Colonial Treasurer* Theodore Hook²¹, les complicités dans la traite illégale²², la fraude à la douane, les passe-droits contre les gens de couleur dans la fonction public qui fut décriés au début du 20ème siècle.²³

Il y eut cependant des efforts pour améliorer l'efficacité de l'administration coloniale, corriger les abus et progressivement susciter la participation des élites locales dans la prise de décision. La liberté de la presse fut octroyée en 1832 par le Ministère des Colonies afin qu'il y ait un contrepoids aux pouvoirs du Gouverneur. En 1885, une nouvelle constitution fut introduite accordant le droit de vote à une élite coloniale restreinte. D'autre part, des Commissions Royales furent instituées pour enrayer des abus de toute sorte par ex. le Eastern Enquiry Commission de 1826, le Royal Commission de 1872 sur l'engagisme Indien, le Royal Commission de 1909 etc. Il eut en outre plusieurs enquêtes sur divers départements²⁴

¹⁹ Chan Low. L.J (1993) : 'T'Eylandt Mauritius et l'île de France' in Notre Librairie No. 114, p. 16-21

²⁰Wanquet C (1990): "Apports et limites de la Révolution aux Mascareignes"; Bissoondoyal U. & Sibartie, A. (eds.): Actes du Colloque: 'L'île Maurice et la Révolution Française', MGI, Moka. p 1-21

²¹Holingworth D (1965): *They came to Mauritius*. OUP. p.77-85

²²Anthony J. Barker (1996): *Slavery and Antislavery in Mauritius, 1810-33: The Conflict Between Economic Expansion and Humanitarian Reform Under British Rule*. St. Martin's Press, p. 24-42: 'Corruption Concealed: The Farquar Era 1810-1822'

²³ Chan Low L.J (2012): 'La France des Rétrocessionnistes, 1919-1921' in Revue Historique de l'Océan Indien, vol.9. In print

²⁴ Voir la liste des Enquiry Commissions dans Toussaint A & Adolphe H (1954): *Bibliography of Mauritius, 1502-1954*

L'Après Deuxième Guerre Mondiale

C'est durant la période de l'après deuxième guerre mondiale marquée par le processus de décolonisation et de démocratisation²⁵ qu'on voit un renforcement des efforts pour introduire des préceptes de la bonne gouvernance à Maurice. Dans tout l'empire britannique, il était alors question d'une remise en ordre vers plus d'efficacité et plus de participation locales, dans le cadre d'un nouveau partenariat avec l'Angleterre. Pour le Ministère des Colonies c'était le moment de créer des institutions fiables, efficaces²⁶, et crédibles afin d'enraciner les bonnes pratiques et les institutions démocratiques dans une société pluriethnique.²⁷

Mais le raffermissement des efforts en faveur d'une bonne gouvernance ne venait pas uniquement du Ministère des Colonies ; il y avait aussi la participation des partis politiques locaux²⁸ et les associations non-gouvernementales comme les représentants des entreprises privées²⁹ (déjà très puissantes avant la conquête Britannique³⁰) et la société civile³¹ qui était déjà très active au début du

²⁵Morgan: *The Official History of Colonial Development, Vol. 5. Guidance Towards Self Government in British Colonies, 1941-1971*. MacMillan, p.185; Whitehead Laurence (2002): *Democratization Theory and Experience* (Oxford Studies in Democratization) Oxford University Press, USA

²⁶ Lange Mathew (2003): *Embedding the Colonial State: A Comparative-Historical Analysis of State Building and Broad-Based Development in Mauritius*. Social Science History. The Social Science History Association p.398

²⁷Ibid, p. 417

²⁸PRO CO961-29: Memorandum du Mauritius Labour Party au Banwell Commission, 8/1/1966; PRO CO961-31: Memorandum du Tamil United Party au Banwell Commission à Maurice Janvier 1966; PRO CO961-29: Banwell Commission: Meeting in the Chamber of the Council of Ministers with representatives of the Labour Party, 17/1/1966

²⁹ PRO CO1036-623: Lettre à Fraser 5/6/1961; PRO CO 1036/642: Memo to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26/6/61

³⁰Sandbrook Richard, Edelman Marc, Heller Patrick, Teichman Judith (2007): *Social Democracy in the Global Periphery. Origins, Challenges, Prospects*. Cambridge University Press, p.132

³¹PRO CO1036-1219: Lettre du Officer Administering the Government of Mauritius au Secretary of State for the Colonies, 22/2/1965, 16/11/1964, 12/6/63, 22/7/63; Chan Low L.J (2008): *Vie Politique et Elections Générales de 1948 à 2005* in Jauze J M (ed.) *L'île Maurice face à ses nouveaux défis*. L'Harmattan

20ème siècle³². Par ex. ces derniers contribuèrent à l'expansion du système éducatif et de la santé, au développement de l'économie, de l'infrastructure publique et de l'état-providence.³³ Comme le souligne Mathews Lange, dès les années 1947 à 1967 Maurice avait une administration relativement efficace parce qu'elle était 'embedded' (très ancrée) dans la société locale.³⁴

A noter aussi la consolidation de l'état de droit, un des principes majeurs de la bonne gouvernance, déjà présent dès les années 1790. Dans le cadre des débats constitutionnels pendant la genèse de la constitution, M. Paturau, un nommé du Conseil Législatif plaida en faveur des *entrenched clauses*³⁵ pour renforcer le 'rule of law'. Ces clauses qui auraient pour but de soumettre mécanismes et institutions à la loi et de leur faire fonctionner avec transparence et par des structures indépendantes et impartiales à tous les niveaux, notamment politique (les parlements), judiciaire et administratif, ne pourraient être amendées sans une majorité de trois-quarts de l'Assemblée Législative. Parmi on retrouve par ex. les provisions pour les *Services Commissions* [le *Public Service Commission (PSC)*, le *Police Commission*, et le *Judicial and Legal Service Commissions*].³⁶

Egalement important dans le cadre de la bonne gouvernance, la démocratie fut consolidée à travers l'élargissement du suffrage à tous ceux et celles pouvant lire et écrire dans une des neuf langues en usage dans la colonie en 1947, l'octroi du suffrage universel en 1958, le développement de la démocratie régionale avec les conseils de villages, de districts et municipaux élus à partir de 1951, le droit de vote aux Rodriguais à partir de 1967, l'introduction du système ministériel en 1957, l'institutionnalisation d'un Gouverneur

Général avec des pouvoirs discrétionnaires pour dissoudre l'Assemblée Législative si elle votait une motion de censure sur la personne du Premier Ministre ou du gouvernement tout en garantissant la protection des minorité sa travers des provisions diverses parmi lesquelles on retrouve un Commissaire de Police indépendant³⁷; l'absence d'un Ministre de la Justice remplacé par un Attorney General pour les poursuites publiques³⁸; un Directeur de Poursuite Publique avec des pouvoirs indépendants quant aux poursuites au criminel³⁹; le droit de faire appel au Conseil Privé de Londres⁴⁰; entre autres.

En outre, depuis le 1er Mars 1957, le London Agreement introduit des termes stipulant que chaque section majeure de la population devait avoir suffisamment d'opportunité pour obtenir une représentation proportionnel au nombre de sa communauté dans le Conseil Législative.⁴¹ De plus il y eut l'introduction des mécanismes du '3 members constituencies' dans le cadre d'un système électorale uninominal majoritaire⁴² et le *best-loser system* pour consolider ce qui a été décrite comme une démocratie consociative. Bien qu'elle soit controversable, le système électoral est perçu comme avoir contribué à la stabilité sociale.⁴³

Université de la Réunion (2008), p.1-10; Sandbrook Richard, Edelman Marc, Heller Patrick, Teichman Judith (2007): op cit, p.135

³²Sandbrook Richard, Edelman Marc, Heller Patrick, Teichman Judith (2007): op cit, p.132

³³Lange Mathew (2003): op cit p. 412-414

³⁴Ibid, p. 411

³⁵ PRO CO1036-1146: lettre de J.S. Rennie à Trafford 13/8/1965

³⁶ Lange Mathew (2003): op cit, p.411; PRO CO1036-1152: *Brief on Public Service, Mauritius Constitutional Conference, Pacific and Indian Ocean Department*

³⁷ PRO CO1036-1590: Mauritius Constitutional Conference, 1965, report by the Chairman

³⁸ PRO CO1036-1083: lettre de Trafford Smith au Gouverneur Sir John Rennie K.C.M.G., O.B.E, 27/5/1964

³⁹PRO CO1036-1083: Lettre d'I.H. Cruchley à Mr Terell, 21/4/1964; PRO CO1036-1083: lettre de Duncan Sandts au Gouverneur Sir John Rennie K.C.M.G., O.B.E, etc., 15/6/1964

⁴⁰ PRO CO1036-1163: Mauritius Constitutional Conference Brief on Safeguards for Minorities

⁴¹ PRO CO1036-630: Memorandum du Parti Mauricien au Secretary of State for Colonies, 7/4/1961; PRO CO1036-630: Memorandum of PM to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7/4/61; Sessional Paper No. 3 of 1956, Despatch of the Secretary of State to the Governor, 10/2/1956; de Smith S. A. (1968): *Mauritius: Constitutionalism in a Plural Society: The Modern Law Review*, Vol. 31, No. 6, p. 601-622; Mozaffar Shaheen (2005): *Negotiating Independence in Mauritius* "International Negotiation 10: 263-291; Report of Select Committee on Proportional Representation (2004) <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/AssemblySite>

⁴²Bräutigam, Deborah A (1999): "Mauritius: Rethinking the Miracle." *Current History*. Volume 98 #628. p.145

⁴³Boudet Catherine (2001): "L'émergence de la démocratie consociative à Maurice (1948-1968)." *Annuaire des pays de l'Océan Indien*. Volume 17. p. 325-

Un autre fondement de la bonne gouvernance est l'établissement d'un *Bill of Rights*⁴⁴ dans la constitution incluant la protection des droits fondamentaux et des libertés individuelles et des provisions pour rectifier les violations de ces droits et libertés devant les tribunaux.⁴⁵ Il faut noter les spécificités du préambule de la constitution Mauricienne qui, par exemple, garantit explicitement l'existence des collèges confessionnelles et fait provision pour l'inclusion du *Muslim Personal Law*.⁴⁶

En matière de transparence, suite au *Mauritius Constitutional Review Talks* de 1961 il y eut aussi la création d'un Ministère de l'Information et de la Communication. Ce nouveau Ministère avait comme responsabilité les services postaux, les télégraphes, les télécommunications, et le *Central Office de l'Information Broadcasting Service*.⁴⁷

L'institution d'un *Government Information Service* (GIS) indépendant et impartial reposait sur le principe d'une déclaration gouvernementale des politiques faite au Parlement de Londres en 1946, où il était clairement décrété que c'était essentiel pour une bonne administration sous un système démocratique que le public soit suffisamment informé sur les nombreuses affaires où l'action du gouvernement s'immisciait dans leur vie

336; Finlay Andrew (2011): *Governing Ethnic Conflict Consociation, identity and the price of peace*. Routledge Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, p.11; Sachs Commission (2002): *Report of the Commission on Constitutional and Electoral Reform* <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/pmo/file/reform.doc>;

Mathur H (1991): *Parliament in Mauritius* EOI. Stanley, R.Hill; Smith Barbara: Interview in Mauritius Times. 1st Oct 2010; MozaffarShaheen (2005): op cit

⁴⁴ PRO CO1036/1167: Mauritius Constitutional Conference, 1965:12th meeting, 20/9/65; PRO CO1036-1590: Mauritius Constitutional Conference, 1965, report by the Chairman; de Smith S. A. (1968): op cit

⁴⁵ PRO CO1036-1161: Mauritius Constitutional Conference: Brief on Safeguards for Minorities: Letter of M.G. de Winton to Mr. Fairclough 1/9/65; PRO CO1036-1590: Mauritius Constitutional Conference, 1965, report by the Chairman; PRO CO1036-625: Question de Mr. Patrick Wall a Mr. Macleod, 11/7/1961

⁴⁶ de Smith S. A. (1968): op cit
⁴⁷ PRO CO1036-624: lettre de Reginald Maudling au Gouverneur Sir Colville Deverell, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., O.B.E, 18/12/1961

quotidienne.⁴⁸ Ayant pour mission la transparence et l'obligation de rendre compte, c'était le devoir des GIS de tenir le peuple informé des activités du gouvernement et des services gouvernementaux en général, et en particulier sur les activités qui allaient entraver leur vie quotidienne. Les informations sur ces activités devaient être présentées de façon attrayante et convaincante mais en laissant les organes populaires comme les parties politiques et la presse attribuer les mérites des accomplissements du gouvernement et de réclamer le soutien du public pour le parti au pouvoir. Pour le Ministère des Colonies, dans une démocratie parlementaire le principal endroit où l'action du gouvernement était expliquée, défendue ou recommandée, c'était la législature. Ainsi aucune publicité faite sous le GIS devait être un substitut à la responsabilité primaire d'un Ministre au Conseil Législatif.⁴⁹

Dans ses relations avec la presse (qui avait un grand rôle au niveau de la transparence de la gestion des affaires publiques⁵⁰ dès les années 1791), le Ministre de l'Information devait adopter une attitude de stricte impartialité dans la distribution des matériels et des invitations pour les conférences de presse.

L'Ombudsman: Une étude de cas

Une étude de cas particulier, montrant la prise en compte de la bonne gouvernance dans le processus de démocratisation et la genèse de la constitution souveraine Mauricienne est celle de la création de l'Ombudsman. Comme l'a été souligné dans la déclaration du Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe tenu en Octobre 2011, *'l'institution d'Ombudsman est un élément essentiel de la bonne gouvernance. Elle offre à chaque citoyen une protection précieuse contre les abus administratifs et un instrument important pour contrôler les autorités*

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ PRO CO1036-624: Ibid

⁵⁰ PRO CO1036-1084: lettre de Sir J. Rennie 6/5/1965; lettre de Sir J. Rennie à A.J. Fairclough, Esq. 26/4/1965; Sandbrook Richard, Edelman Marc, Heller Patrick, Teichman Judith 2007: op cit, p.135

publiques et soutenir la confiance du public envers les administrations locales et régionales.⁵¹ En outre, dans le contexte de ce que Huntington décrit comme le *Third Wave of Democratization*, l'Ombudsman est devenue dans plusieurs états une des institutions clés dans la défense et la protection des Droits Humains.

Le mot 'Ombudsman' est un dérivé du terme Suédois *Hagsteombudsmannen* (1713) qui veut dire agent ou représentant du peuple ou d'un groupe de personnes.⁵² L'établissement moderne de cette institution émane du *Justitieombudsman* qui fut établi dans la constitution Suède de 1809 pour contrôler le Parlement, superviser les activités de l'administration publique, assurer l'application juste du principe d'état de droit et dénoncer toutes les irrégularités et négligences de la part des officiers de l'administration et les administrateurs du judiciaire aussi bien qu'enquêter sur les doléances du peuple.⁵³ La prolifération d'Ombudsman durant les dernières décennies du 20ème siècle, et la prise en compte de l'importance de créer des institutions par rapport au contexte politique de chaque pays a eu pour conséquences de nombreuses variations dans la nature et les fonctions de l'institution de l'Ombudsman dans le monde entier.⁵⁴

En général l'Ombudsman basé sur le model Scandinave est une institution sans aucun contrôle juridique, avec un responsable nommé par le Parlement (le seul corps à qui il est redevable) et a comme double mission de protéger les droits fondamentaux des citoyens et de superviser les opérations de toute l'administration publique. Il a une étendue nationale et a le devoir spécifique de s'occuper des doléances reçues directement des citoyens concernant les violations de leur droits fondamentaux ou la mal administration, et il a

aussi le pouvoir d'agir par ses propres initiatives. La durée du mandat du bureau est indépendante de la période du législatif et l'institution est souvent établie dans la constitution du pays et a le pouvoir de faire des appels d'inconstitutionnalités.⁵⁵

A Maurice l'idée d'un Ombudsman apparait en 1961⁵⁶ à travers d'une part les propositions constitutionnelles de S. Bissoondoyal, Leader du Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) en faveur de l'établissement d'un *High-Powered Tribunal* et de l'autre, la proposition du Parti Mauricien pour un Conseil d'Etat.

En 1961 dans leur mémorandum pour l'avancement constitutionnel, l'IFB alléguait que la constitution alors en vigueur était dépassée et que le pays avait besoin d'une constitution qui encouragerait les élections régulières, la liberté de pensée et d'action dans l'intérêt principal du pays, l'intégrité, l'impartialité, l'efficacité dans l'administration, l'emploi pour un grand nombre, la suppression des privilèges et des monopoles, la justice politique, sociale et économique, la bonne redistribution des terres en friche, un accroissement et une rémunération raisonnable par rapport au revenu national *per capita* pour chacun.⁵⁷ Mais parmi les principales propositions on retrouve les commissions d'enquête et la création d'un *High-Powered Tribunal* proprement composé, avec des pouvoirs étendus pour enquêter sur les allégations d'incompétence, de discrimination, de favoritisme, de gaspillages, et de corruption, dans les départements gouvernementaux et la Police, et aussi sur le chômage, la montée

⁵¹Conseil de l'Europe Congrès des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux Strasbourg, 18-20 octobre 2011, <http://www.wcd.coe.int/viewDoc.jsp?id=1741373&Site=CM>

⁵² Enrique Mugica Herzog: *The Book of the Ombudsman* p. 185, <http://www.defensordelpueblo.es>

⁵³Dr. Victor Ayeni: *The Role and Effectiveness of the Ombudsman Institution*. The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) 2005, p.6; Enrique Mugica Herzog: op cit, p.185

⁵⁴Dr. Victor Ayeni : op cit, p.8

⁵⁵ Enrique Mugica Herzog: op cit p.190

⁵⁶Hing Yong Cheng (1968): *The Emergence and Spread of the Ombudsman Institution*. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 377, The Ombudsman or Citizen's Defender: A Modern Institution, p.20-30

⁵⁷PRO CO1036-623: Mauritius constitutional conference 1961, Pacific and Indian Ocean Department May 1961; PRO CO1036-631: Lettre du Gouverneur C. Deverell à Ian Macleod P.C., M.P *Secretary of State for the Colonies*, 13/4/1961

excessive des prix, l'exode des capitaux⁵⁸ et autre urgences.⁵⁹

Par contre le Parti Mauricien vint avec la proposition d'un Conseil d'Etat multiracial basé sur le modèle de Kenya (1958).⁶⁰ Le Conseil devait avoir des pouvoirs de différer et de révision pour protéger la société des législations nuisible et d'empêcher les discriminations à l'encontre des minorités; et de voir à ce que les clauses de la Déclaration de droits humains écrites dans la constitution ne soient pas défiées⁶¹. Le Conseil devait inclure 12 membres (qui ne seraient pas des membres du Conseil Législatif) nommés par le Gouverneur, dont 4 seraient des hindous, 3 issus de la population générale, 2 musulmans, 1 chinois, 1 représentant de l'industrie sucrière et un du commerce.⁶²

Le communiqué final resta flou quant à ces deux propositions, le Ministère des Colonies ayant des réserves quant à leur adoption⁶³. Du reste les propositions à la fois du Parti Mauricien et de l'IFB n'étaient point explicites. Par exemple le *High Powered Tribunal* comme suggéré par S. Bissoondoyal aurait eu certaines fonctions d'un Conseil d'Etat.⁶⁴

Après la Conférence de 1961, des discussions furent entamées autour des propositions. Au Ministère des Colonies, on évoqua la création d'un Ombudsman à la place mais il fut décidé de référer toute l'affaire à l'expert constitutionnel le Professeur de Smith de la *London School of Economics and Political*

Science. Quant à Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Leader du Parti Travailleiste, lors de son passage à Londres en 1962, il déclara à Terrell qu'il était favorable à l'idée d'instituer un Ombudsman de préférence basé sur le modèle de la Nouvelle Zélande.⁶⁵ Prenant en considération les peurs des minorités et la situation politique il était pour l'institution mais elle devrait être constituée d'un seul homme au lieu d'un Tribunal car c'était moins coûteux.⁶⁶ Et finalement S. Bissoondoyal aussi se plia à l'idée d'un Ombudsman car pour lui l'importance était la création d'un 'chien de garde' peu importe le modèle. Le Parti Mauricien de son côté se disait toujours en faveur d'un Conseil d'Etat mais accepta l'idée d'un Ombudsman⁶⁷ et c'est fut le cas aussi pour d'autres petits partis locaux.⁶⁸

Pour le Ministère des Colonies la question d'introduire un Conseil d'Etat ou un Tribunal ou un Ombudsman n'était guère urgent mais vu qu'il s'était engagé par les termes du communiqué final de la Conférence de 1961, il était obligé d'y prendre le temps d'y considérer.⁶⁹ Par conséquent, le Ministère des Colonies décida de consulter de Smith sur l'importance d'instituer un Conseil d'Etat ou un Tribunal ou un Ombudsman⁷⁰ et il envoya aussi deux représentants Mauriciens (S. Ramgoolam choisi d'envoyer S. Bissoondoyal du IFB et Forget, un Ministre du *Mauritius Labour Party*) à un séminaire des Nations Unies tenu en Juin 1962 à Stockholm⁷¹ et

⁵⁸ PRO CO1036-646: Note of talks between the Governor and Mr. Thomas and Political leaders 27/3/1963

⁵⁹ PRO CO1036-631: lettre du Gouverneur C. Deverell à Ian Macleod P.C., M.P Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13/4/1961, op cit

⁶⁰ PRO CO 1036-630: Memorandum by PM to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7/4/61; PRO CO 1036-639: Brief summary of proposals of parties, June 1961; PRO CO 1036/641: Constitutional safeguards – middle-term and long-term, S. A de Smith, 20/06/61; PRO CO1036-641: rapport de S.A de Smith...13/6/1961

⁶¹ PRO CO1036-624 : Lettre de D.W à A.R. Thomas, Esq., C.M.G., 3/11/ 1961

⁶² PRO CO1036-641: rapport de S.A de Smith 13/6/1961

⁶³ PRO CO1036/1082: Review Talks of 1961: Final Communiqué

⁶⁴ PRO CO1036/646: letter to A.R Thomas, 3 Nov 1961

⁶⁵ PRO CO1036-646: J.E Marnham to Sir Colville Deverell, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., O.B.E, 27 Fevrier 1962

⁶⁶ PRO CO1036-646: Note on the Mauritius Constitution par A.R. Thomas, Avril 1963; PRO CO1036-1082: lettre de A.R Thomas à Mr. Marnham 16/5/1963

⁶⁷ PRO CO1036-646: Note on the Mauritius Constitution par A.R. Thomas, Avril 1963

⁶⁸ PRO CO1036-1163: Mauritius Constitutional Conference Brief on The Ombudsman

⁶⁹ PRO CO1036-624: lettre de A.R. Thomas au Gouverneur Sir Colville Deverell, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., O.B.E, 26/10/1961

⁷⁰ PRO CO1036-624: lettre de J.E Marnham au Gouverneur Sir John Rennie, KCMG, CBE. 21/12/1962; PRO CO1036-625: Question de Mr. Patrick Wall à Mr. Macleod, 11/7/ 1961, op cit; PRO CO1036-646: Note on the Mauritius Constitution par A.R. Thomas, Avril 1963 op cit

⁷¹ PRO CO1036-646: Note on the Mauritius Constitution par A.R. Thomas, Avril 1963 op cit; lettre du Secretary of State for the Colonies à Sir C. Deverell 12/06/1962 ; lettre de Sir C. Deverell au Secretary of State for the Colonies, 08/06/1962

organisé dans le cadre du programme d'*Advisory Services* dans le domaine des droits humains qui devait débattre de l'Institution d'Ombudsman.⁷²

Quand ces propositions furent soulevées avec de Smith il se déclara sceptique au départ. Selon ce dernier un Conseil d'Etat sur le modèle de Kenya voudrait dire en référence au paragraphe 6 (5) du Communiqué de la Conférence de 1961 que les protections de droits humains tomberaient dans les mains des tribunaux.⁷³ De même, les retombées de la création du Conseil d'Etat au Kenya étaient encore obscures et il n'était pas certain qu'une telle institution puisse survivre si elle était la cause sérieuse et persistante à l'obstruction des passages de projets de loi majeurs du Gouvernement. Pour lui un Conseil d'Etat n'était pas nécessaire dans l'immédiat. Et si Maurice devait en avoir besoin après avoir atteint un niveau plus élevé de gouvernement responsable, de Smith se demandait si on pouvait trouver des membres vraiment capables et impartiaux. Selon lui, les provisions sur les droits fondamentaux pour empêcher les discriminations injustes et une nouvelle formule particulière pour faciliter et faire avancer les procès au tribunal sur les législations alléguées discriminatoires étaient suffisantes.⁷⁴

Il avait aussi tendance à penser que les fonctions d'un *High Powered Tribunal* comme apparemment envisagé par S. Bissoondoyal serait mieux exécuté par un Ombudsman étranger, réputé et indépendant nommé par Sa Majesté.⁷⁵ Ce genre d'institution était sujet à nombre d'objections, mais valait la peine d'être considérée à condition que ce fût bien explicite qu'elle ne s'ingérerait point dans les *Service Commissions*. Sa véritable crainte était qu'elle allait être étouffée par les pétitions et que l'hostilité politique allait affaiblir son utilité.⁷⁶

Pour de Smith, la polémique politique à Maurice tournait excessivement sur des allégations de corruption, népotisme et discrimination à caractère communal. La peur de la 'domination Hindoue' dans un contexte où les propositions de régulation sociale et économique étaient très controversées préméditait que ces allégations allaient s'empirer et augmenter de manière considérable dans le futur. On pouvait espérer que ces peurs allaient peut-être s'apaiser et le motif raisonnable pour faire une doléance serait réduit par le travail indépendant des *Service Commissions*. Mais il y aura toujours de la place pour convertir les actes de discrimination (ou allégations de ces actes) dans un processus administrative. De ce fait, il proposa de nommer un Commissaire Parlementaire indépendant qui aurait la responsabilité d'enquêter et de faire des rapports sur les allégations de discrimination selon les critères de race, de couleur ou de religion faite à l'encontre d'un membre de l'administration publique ou d'un Ministre.⁷⁷

L'étude des comptes rendus des débats de la conférence de 1965 révèle qu'il n'y eut point de grandes controverses autour de l'institution de l'Ombudsman. Il y avait consensus que l'institution serait érigée selon la formule proposée par De Smith dans les paragraphes 42 à 47 de son rapport.⁷⁸ Ainsi l'Ombudsman aurait un mandat de quatre ans et serait nommé par le Gouverneur après consultation avec le Premier Ministre et le Leader de l'Opposition⁷⁹. Il aurait le pouvoir d'enquêter sur les plaintes contre les départements gouvernementaux et les officiers et de faire des rapports adverses s'il découvrait qu'il y avait eu des actes, lacunes, recommandations, et décisions qui son déraisonnable et contraire à la loi.⁸⁰

⁷² PRO CO1036-646: lettre de A.R. Titcher à Mr Terell, 24/01/1962

⁷³ PRO CO1036-624: Lettre de D.W à A.R. Thomas, Esq., C.M.G., 3/11/ 1961

⁷⁴ PRO CO1036-641: 13/6/ 1961

⁷⁵ PRO CO1036-624: Lettre de D.W à A.R. Thomas, Esq., C.M.G., 3 /11/1961

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ PRO CO1036-641: rapport de S.A de Smith, 13/6/ 1961

⁷⁸ PRO CO1036-1167: Minutes of meeting , 21/9/1965

⁷⁹ PRO CO1036-1590: Mauritius Constitutional Conference, 1965, report by the Chairman

⁸⁰ PRO CO1036-1161: Mauritius Constitutional Conference: Brief on Safeguards for Minorities: Letter of M.G. de Winton to Mr. Fairclough 1/9/65; Robbers Gerhard (2007): *Encyclopedia of World constitutions*. Info base Publishing New York

Il pourra aussi agir sur ses propres initiatives ou en recevant une plainte d'un individu ou d'un corps et les affaires pourraient aussi lui être référées par les Ministres et les membres de l'Assemblée Législative.⁸¹ Il aurait le droit d'enquêter sur les départements gouvernementaux, ses officiers, les Conseils d'appels d'offres, la Police et la Prison et les autorités hospitalières.⁸² Cependant, les actions et décisions personnelles des Ministres et les décisions des *Services Commissions* seraient exclues des enquêtes de l'Ombudsman.⁸³ De plus, l'enquête de l'Ombudsman serait faite en privé et ce qui se passerait au cours d'une enquête resterait absolument confidentielles.⁸⁴ Il ne serait point nécessaire à l'Ombudsman d'entendre les défenses d'une personne au cas où il lui semblerait qu'il y avait des raisons pour décrier la conduite du département, organisation ou personne concerné.⁸⁵ Il aurait aussi le pouvoir d'examiner les témoins et le pouvoir d'empêcher la divulgation de l'information au cas où cela pourrait porter préjudice à la défense, les relations externes ou la sécurité interne ou qui s'apparenterait à divulguer les procédures du Conseil des Ministres.⁸⁶ L'Ombudsman serait de même en droit de refuser des plaintes datant de plus de six mois ou sur la base qu'elles étaient frivoles ou dérisoires ou que le plaignant n'avait pas suffisamment d'intérêt dans l'affaire ; il pourra arrêter une enquête sur n'importe quel raison qui lui semble approprié.⁸⁷ Il sera exclu d'enquêter les affaires qui ont des droits d'appel légal ou révision par un tribunal. Mais il ne sera pas exclu des enquêtes simplement parce qu'il sera libre au plaignant d'attribuer la mesure, actes ou décision dans l'affaire comme une violation de garanties constitutionnelle des droits fondamentaux.⁸⁸

Il aurait le pouvoir de rapporter inversement n'importe quels actes, lacunes, recommandations, et décisions déraisonnables et contraires à la loi ; il rendrait son rapport,

⁸¹ PRO CO1036-1090: Conference Report. Note by the Secretary-General, M.M. Minogue, Annex D 24/9/1965

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid

recommandant quelconque action corrective qui lui semblerait appropriée, au département ou organisation concerné.⁸⁹ Si aucune action corrective suffisante n'avait été entreprise dans un laps de temps raisonnable, il aurait le pouvoir de faire un rapport spécial à l'Assemblée Législative.⁹⁰

Les arrangements pour l'Ombudsman suivront de près la législation sur le Commissaire Parlementaire de la Nouvelle Zélande, avec quelques modifications pour prendre en compte le contexte Mauricien.⁹¹ Mais d'après un article de de Smith lui-même, l'office de Ombudsman qui fut finalement adopté⁹² et institué en 1969 dans la constitution est similaire à celle du Commissaire Parlementaire de la Grande Bretagne et de l'Ombudsman de Guyane britannique.⁹³

A noter qu'il fut convenu que l'institution et les fonctions majeures de l'Ombudsman seraient inscrites dans la Constitution mais que certaines clauses seraient détaillées dans la loi ordinaire du pays.⁹⁴ Ce fut ainsi que l'Ombudsman Act ne fut proclamé qu'en 1969.

Qu'a été l'apport de cette institution à l'île Maurice. Joue-t-elle le rôle que S. Bissoondoyal avait en tête quand il proposa la création d'un *High Powered Tribunal*. Si oui pourquoi alors avoir créé des institutions semblable (à l'instar de l'Echo, de l'Icac, de l'Office de *Public Sector Governance* annoncée depuis quelques temps⁹⁵, du *Humans Rights Commission*, du *Police Complaints Bureau*, de l'*Equal Opportunities Commission*) et augmenter ainsi les dépenses de l'Etat? Les limites des réalisations de l'Ombudsman peuvent-elles être attribuées au fait que le Ministère des Colonies croyant que les protections contre les grands abus étaient

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ PRO CO1036-1163: Mauritius Constitutional Conference Brief on The Ombudsman

⁹² PRO CO1036-1084: Questions de Patrick Wall à Mr. Greenwood, 28/10/1965

⁹³ de Smith S. A. (1968): op cit

⁹⁴ PRO CO1036-1090: Conference Report. Note by the Secretary-General, M.M. Minogue, Annex D 24/9/1965

⁹⁵ [Le Mauricien](http://www.lemauricien.com), 12 January, 2012, <http://www.lemauricien.com>

déjà encrées dans le tissu social de Maurice à un degré important, ne voulait pas emprisonner dans un carcan ceux qui avaient le devoir de gouverner le pays uniquement par peur que si on leur donnait une quelconque liberté d'action ils n'allaient pas considérer les désirs du peuple.⁹⁶ Au moment de la genèse de sa constitution, Maurice faisait face à des graves problèmes démographiques et économiques et pour eux le gouvernement en place ne devait pas être gêné de gouverner.⁹⁷ Mais suffira-t-il de reformer les provisions restreintes de la constitution⁹⁸ pour améliorer la fonction de cette institution?

CONCLUSION

Pour conclure, le contexte historique et politique et la philosophie et les nombreux mécanismes (en particulier l'Ombudsman) énoncés dans cette communication montrent que même précaire la notion de 'bonne gouvernance' dans la forme d'une société civiles active, d'une presse libre, et de l'institutionnalisation des principes essentiels (**l'obligation de rendre compte, la transparence, l'efficacité et l'efficacé, la réceptivité, la prospective, la primauté du droit etc.**) furent pris en compte à la fois par les autorités coloniales et le personnel politique local afin de créer des institutions fiables pouvant assurer la stabilité politique et le développement harmonieux du pays.

Mais un régime constitutionnel se juge dans la pratique et paradoxalement, les enquêtes et sondages révèlent qu'une grande majorité de Mauriciens ont perdu confiance dans certaines institutions et placent la corruption parmi les plus grands fléaux du pays perturbant l'efficacité de l'action et des dépenses publiques en particulier, ainsi que l'ensemble de l'activité économique. Depuis l'indépendance, chaque gouvernement a été éclaboussé par un scandale au cours de son mandat, la récente affaire 'Medpoint' n'étant que la toute dernière d'une longue série. De

même, comme dans les années 1950s, le 'plat de résistance' du débat politique reste les allégations de corruption, de passe droits et d'abus de toute sorte.

Est-ce du aux déficiences et carences administratives et légales de certaines institutions qui avait été créées pour assurer le rôle de garde-fou, à l'instar de l'Ombudsman? Est-ce parcequ'en général les efforts ont été concentrés sur le développement de nouvelles lois (*Equal Opportunities Act*) et la création de nouvelles institutions (l'Echo, l'Icac, le *National Human Right Commission*, "l'Office de *Public Sector Governance*"⁹⁹) au lieu d'élever la capacité à assurer le respect de ces règles existants ?

Ou est-ce en raison des défaillances et perversions de notre culture et pratiques politiques où l'on retrouve à la fois le poids de l'argent et par conséquent le financement occulte des partis politique et l'ethnicisation à outrance et l'omniprésence des groupes socioculturelles? Ou finalement est-ce parceque l'espace politique est assailli par la submersion économique (globalisation) et la *fragilisation de l'Etat (fin du modèle westphalien (1648))* qui fait que la mauvaise gouvernance qui en découle se manifeste dans un double bilan où "*ceux d'en haut ne peuvent plus gouverner comme avant, ceux d'en bas ne veulent plus être gouvernés comme avant.*" (Lénine)¹⁰⁰.

Néanmoins comparé à d'autre pays développés avec une histoire de lutte pour « la bonne gouvernance » plus longue et plus grandiose, à l'instar de la France, la République de Maurice, eu égard sa spécificité d'*Island State* pluriethnique peut se vanter d'avoir atteint le stade où elle est classée parmi les 'meilleurs états de bonne gouvernance'¹⁰¹, mais il reste encore un long chemin à parcourir dans la voie de la bonne gouvernance...

⁹⁶ PRO CO1036-1163: Mauritius Constitutional Conference Brief on Safeguards for Minorities

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Darga L.A (2009): *Promoting the Effectiveness of Democracy Protection Institution in Southern Africa*. The Ombudsman and the National Human Right Commission. EISA, South Africa, p.54

⁹⁹ [Le Mauricien](http://www.lemauricien.com), 12 January, 2012, <http://www.lemauricien.com>

¹⁰⁰ Jean Freyss: op cit p, 10

¹⁰¹ Democracy Index Table 2010: *A Report from the Economist Intelligence Unit*. The Economist

Gendering Governance: The Case of Mauritius



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Abstract

The relationship between gender and governance is often neglected in both conceptual and empirical work. With the focus on democracy, transparency, accountability, inclusive citizenship and participatory processes, there is huge potential in the ideas and practices of governance to catalyse real change in terms of gender equality. However, this potential remains largely untapped. The challenge remains to change the entrenched unequal, gendered power relations and other forms of exclusion that have been built into governing

processes and institutions for centuries. This paper argues that gender equality in the decision-making fora is vital, both for enabling far-reaching social change and for empowering people excluded from decision making on gender grounds. Though, there has been some progress in Mauritius in redressing the gender imbalance in national and local governance processes and institutions, more is still to be achieved. This paper analyses women participation in governance in the small island economy of Mauritius by designing potential gender-sensitive governance indicators such as the gender gap index; voter turnout among registered females; prevalence of women in poor districts and the percentage of seats in National Parliament reserved for women

Keywords: Democratic Governance, Gender Imbalances, Female Participation, Mauritius

INTRODUCTION

Women are often excluded from decision-making, from the household up to the highest levels of policymaking. Women's equal participation in governance is an important end in itself; a recognition of their right to speak and be heard. More broadly, it is a means to social transformation. Decisions made and policies implemented by governance institutions at global, national and local levels help to shape perceptions of the roles that women and men play in society, as well as determining their access to rights and resources. Involving women in defining these policies and processes, and in influencing the institutions that produce them, makes it more likely they will respond to the different needs and situations of both women and men, and contribute to gender equality.

There has been a fundamental failure to challenge entrenched unequal gendered power relations and other forms of exclusion that have been inbuilt in governing processes and institutions. There are still far fewer women than men in decision-making positions at global, national and local levels of governance – including the micro-levels of the community and household. In 2011, the number of women parliamentarians around the world amount to 8,716 and they represented 19.25 percent of the total number of parliamentarians (UNDP, 2012). Further, only 17.05 percent of

chambers comprise of more than 30 percent of women and 20.45 percent of chambers are comprised of less than 10 percent women. The Rwandan Chamber of Deputies has the highest percentage of women (56.25 percent) in the world. It is followed by the General Council of Andorra (53.57 percent).

Though, Mauritius has successfully transformed itself from a vulnerable island confronted with severe structural problems into a success story, gender equality does not represent an essential component of the country. Women are still marginalized within the political and public life of the country. In spite of the commitment of the government to the goal of the Southern African Development Community to increase the number of women in the decision-making process of the country and in its political life to 30 per cent, the representation of women as of date is extremely low or even inexistent in many facets of the political and public life of the country and in the decision-making positions, including the National Assembly, the municipals councillors, the village councillors, mayors, heads of districts councils, directors in State-owned companies and in foreign service. For instance, female parliamentarians comprise of less than 20 per cent of the total number in 2010 and female candidates represent only 11 per cent of the candidates at the 2010 National Legislative Assembly Election and during the same year, there were only 3 women ministers out of a total of 25 (12 per cent) (Statistics Mauritius, 2010).

The objective of the paper is to show that gender equality in decision-making is vital, essentially for a small developing economy, both for enabling far-reaching social change and for empowering people excluded from decision making on the grounds of their gender. Though there has been some progress in Mauritius in redressing the gender imbalance in national and local governance processes and institutions, more need to be done to integrate women in the decision making process. We use gender-sensitive governance indicators like the gender gap index, the voter turnout among registered females; prevalence of women in poor districts and the percentage of seats in national Parliament reserved for women to analyse the participation of women in governance in Mauritius.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature on gender and governance. Section 3 sets out the data source and methodology used while section 4 analyses the findings based on the gender-sensitive indicators. We finally conclude in section 5.

2. Theoretical Review

Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations (McCawley 2006, Malena 2006). Good governance means creating well-functioning and accountable institutions – political, judicial and administrative – which citizens regard as legitimate, in which they participate in decisions that affect their daily lives and by which they are empowered (Annan 1998). The terms governance and 'good governance' are often used interchangeably but there is a need to distinguish between 'governance' as being about processes of decision-making, mechanisms and management, while 'good' or 'effective' governance refers to the quality of these processes, judged against a set of governance principles (Morna, 2004)

Governance happens at five interconnected levels – the household, community, local and national government, and global institutions (Ashworth, 1996). The institutions and actors involved in governance processes vary according to the level. They shape, for example, whether legislation on gender-based violence makes a difference to women in their homes, whether women have access to and control over community land, whether services take account of both women's and men's needs and interests, who benefits most from public expenditure, and who in a household has rights to obtain a divorce or inherit land or property. For example, at the national level the institutions where governance happens include businesses, schools, hospitals, the military and the media, as well as the

government. At the local level, governance takes place not only in local government offices but also in community and household decision-making processes. At a global level, governance is less easy to locate in particular institutions, but the term ‘global governance’ is often used to describe the complex processes of management, and the frameworks and rules through which international social and economic policy is coordinated and regulated (Grugel and Piper, 2007). The global sphere includes multinational corporations as well as international institutions such as the UN agencies and WTO. From a gender perspective, the inclusion of the household, or family, as well as communities and institutions of governance are essential, as this is where many gender inequalities are acted out, shaped by decisions made at international, national and local levels that define rights and responsibilities.

Women are not treated equally in governance institutions and processes (Brody, 2009). Even when women are actively involved in governance, their struggle for equal treatment and recognition is not over. They are often kept on the margins of decision-making in government, confined to ‘soft policy’ areas such as health and education. Existing systems of governance reinforce this marginalisation, with important decisions often made between men in closed ‘inner circles’. Governance institutions also continue to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people on the grounds of their sexuality (Brody, 2009). These forms of marginalisation are just as prevalent in local government and processes designed to include ordinary citizens as they are in national and global institutions. Governance institutions fail to take women’s ‘double burden’ into account. The working arrangements of governance institutions are usually inflexible, making it very difficult for women to balance work with the additional caring responsibilities they are often expected to take on. This is as true for citizen-focused participatory processes as it is for state-level and global institutions. Governance policies fail to challenge gender inequalities and to take the different needs of men and women into account.

As a result of these inequalities in decision-making, governance policies often remain blind to the different needs of men and women. For example, there is a vast amount of evidence indicating that women and other marginalised groups have been negatively affected by trade policy led by the WTO. At the local level, services such as the provision of health, water and education often still fail to meet the needs of women and men. Further, even when institutions commit to gender equality in their policies and practices by ratifying CEDAW (developing a gender equality action plan or promoting gender-sensitive electoral reform) they often fail to take responsibility for these. There can be many reasons for this, including inflexibility within the institution, but a major factor is often that there are no clear mechanisms in place to ensure that gender equality remains a priority. And gender equality may not be an indicator against which the performance of governance actors is assessed.

While many reasons have been identified for the gender imbalance in governance, the most common argument is that the division between public and private spaces has created a barrier to women’s participation in governance. Politics has traditionally been considered a male arena because it operates in the public domain, while in many societies women are expected to restrict their activities to the household and immediate community (Tambiah, 2003; Waylen, 2008b; Mishra-Panda, 2008). It is important to bear in mind that these distinctions between private and public are not ‘givens’. They are themselves part of a set of accepted ideas about the male and female place in society that have been frequently used as a justification, often by partners, families, communities and women themselves; for women’s absence from public life (Rai, 2008). The public–private argument does little to counteract fixed views on female and male social roles, and may conceal gender inequalities within household or family governance that may prevent women from becoming involved in more formal governance institutions and processes (Baden, 2000; Ashworth, 1996). These inequalities may be reinforced by cultural or religious practices as for example in some countries there are strict rules about interactions between men and women who are not related. Women may be prevented from voting or participating in other aspects of governance by male partners or relatives who are concerned their social power will be eroded if their wives, daughters or mothers are equal partners in traditionally male arenas. There are other external constraints that prevent women from being fully

integrated into governance structures, including lack of financial resources, lack of confidence and a lack of personal or family contacts often needed to make it into governance positions. Gender-sensitive governance reforms, such as gender quotas, have facilitated women's entry into politics to an extent, but are considered by many to be an imperfect and superficial solution that does not tackle the roots of unequal access (Nussbaum 2003; Jayal 2003; Corner 1998).

In addition, the low number of women engaged in governance institutions partly fuels poor levels of commitment to challenging gender inequality, but existing social inequalities and unequally gendered power relations at the micro level also present barriers to change within these institutions. Households' implicit governance structures revolve around decision-making power, from which women may be excluded. Communities often have social rules and informal governance processes that may differ from those promoted by national or local government. Individuals working in governance institutions live in households and communities and bring values and experiences from this sphere to negotiations and working relationships. For example, men who receive more privileges than the female members of their families may assume this should also be the case at work. Similarly, perceptions of the roles women should play in governance may be coloured by the roles they are expected to play within the household and community (Ashworth, 1996; Baden, 2000).

Gender-sensitive governance is thus crucial for any society and it begins with putting gender equality and social justice issues at its centre. It needs to recognise the different needs, interests, priorities and responsibilities of men and women and challenge entrenched gender inequalities (Brody, 2009). Governance need to be gender-sensitive for five primary reasons. Governance cannot be effective unless it has gender equality at its centre as it must lead to a more equitable world, where women also have choices and their rights are realised. It cannot be effective if there is no understanding of the differing needs of women and men in public spending, policies, legislation and treaties. Nor can it be effective if women cannot exercise their right to participate equally in the decisions that affect their lives. In short, governance cannot be effective, or good, unless it is gender-sensitive (Jayal, 2003; UNIFEM, 2008). Second, women have a right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Women remain under-represented at all levels of decision-making in governance institutions and less engaged in governance processes. Achieving greater gender equality in governance is an important end in itself as those who have traditionally been excluded because of their gender, sexuality, race or for other reasons have the right to play an equal part in governance institutions and processes. For this reason the Beijing Platform for Action devotes one of its 12 critical areas of concern to Women in Power and Decision-making – its strategic objective is to take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

Third, it will result in policies that promote gender equality and women's rights. While governance institutions can reinforce gender inequalities, they can also challenge them. So ensuring that women play an equal role in shaping the decisions, rules and structures that influence our lives is likely to lead to long-term, sustainable changes. For example, if more women are involved in developing school curricula, there is a good chance they will challenge the gender stereotypes often reinforced through school textbooks. If they have an equal voice in developing legal frameworks, it is likely they will ensure laws do not discriminate against women and that international, gender-focused legislation such as the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* is honoured. This could result in greater equality for women in the workplace and a greater commitment to addressing the problem of gender-based violence. It could also mean establishing legal obligations for companies to provide extended paternity as well as maternity leave so that men and women can share caring responsibilities, as well as more flexible working arrangements so the demands of domestic and work lives can be balanced (Esplen, 2009).

Fourth, it will ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender men and women can exercise their citizenship without persecution. Fifth, it is a means to more effective, equitable resource allocation. Governance institutions determine how public resources are allocated and whether services take account of women's needs for example, government fund childcare facilities, make it easier for women to take on paid work. A greater recognition of

women's as well as men's needs and situations is likely to result in better and more equal allocation of public financial resources, including subsidies for childcare and more targeted delivery of services such as water, education and health services.

While a significant amount of literature is now available on gender and governance, it usually focuses on gender equality in national and local government, often with an emphasis on increasing women's representation in government institutions through electoral reforms such as quotas, which stipulate that women must constitute a certain percentage of the members of a governance body. This paper takes government as an entry point for talking about gender-sensitive governance, because of the extent to which government institutions and processes affect the life of very citizen, and because this is where most of the current work and resources lie. We go further to present the 'bigger picture' of governance through a gender-focused examination of gender-sensitive indicators for the Mauritian economy.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data was collected from different sources namely from the Mauritian Electoral Commissioner's Office, Statistics Mauritius, the Global Gender Gap Report, 2011, Global Parliamentary Report, 2012, Mauritius Household Budget Surveys of 2001/02 and 2006/07 and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The data was used in the computation of gender-sensitive governance indicators used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2007). These indicators are the Gender Gap Index, the percentage of seats reserved in parliament for women, voter turnout among registered females, and prevalence of women in poor districts in Mauritius.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Gender-Sensitive Governance Indicators - Gender Gap Index

Poor systems of governance result in discrimination related to sex among others. In that respect, indicators of gender equality are often used to assess the governance of a country. For instance, the UN Millennium Declaration sets a specific goal on gender equality namely, the Millennium Development Goal 3 which is to promote gender equality and women empowerment. From table 1 below, we note that the overall gender gap index for Mauritius has increased over the years from 2006 to 2011, implying an improvement towards equality¹⁰² in all fields including education, economic participation, health and political attainment. However the score for economic participation and political attainment remain very low.

¹⁰² A score which is 0.00 implies inequality while a score nearing 1.00 implies moving towards higher equality.

Table 1: Gender Gap Index for Mauritius, 2006-2011

	Overall		Economic Participation		Educational Attainment		Health and Survival		Political Attainment	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Gender Gap Index 2011 (out of 135 countries)	95	0.653	105	0.544	74	0.989	1	0.980	86	0.099
Gender Gap Index 2010 (out of 134 countries)	95	0.652	103	0.549	76	0.988	1	0.980	91	0.091
Gender Gap Index 2009 (out of 134 countries)	96	0.651	109	0.546	80	0.988	1	0.980	92	0.091
Gender Gap Index 2008 (out of 130 countries)	95	0.647	103	0.527	77	0.988	1	0.980	90	0.091
Gender Gap Index 2007 (out of 128 countries)	85	0.649	100	0.547	75	0.983	1	0.980	82	0.085
Gender Gap Index 2006 (out of 115 countries)	88	0.633	95	0.483	65	0.983	1	0.980	73	0.085

Source: Global Gender Gap Report, 2011

Gender equality and women empowerment are often assessed in three areas: education, wage employment and representation in National Parliament. In Mauritius, there exists no gender disparity in education. In primary schools, there were around 97 girls for every 100 boys at primary level during the period 2000 to 2010, seemingly in favour of boys. However, given that there are fewer girls than boys of primary school age (sex ratio is around 97), there is no gender disparity at primary level. At secondary level, the ratio is in favour of girls in spite of more boys of secondary school age being more numerous than girls in the population. This is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Ratio of girls to boys by education level¹⁰³, Republic of Mauritius 2000 - 2010

Education Level	2000	2005	2010
Primary	96.8	97.0	96.8
Secondary	101.3	103.2	105.4

Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resources

However, the gender gap in labour market is yet to be bridged. Women are less economically active compared to men (Tandrayen-Ragoobur et al. 2011). The number of unemployed persons numbered 45,200, comprising 16,700 males and 28,500 females. In 2010, the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent, higher among females (13.0 percent) than among males (4.6 percent). In the same year, unemployed women outnumbered unemployed men at all ages though they were generally more qualified. Women represented 63 percent of the total unemployed and they outnumbered men by 11,800. The disparity between male and female unemployment was highest in the lower age group; the difference was nearly 22 percentage points among the unemployed below 20 years and around 3

¹⁰³ Number of girls per 100 boys

percentage points among those aged 50 years and above. This gender gap in the labour market contributes to the low score in the gender gap index for economic participation as shown in Table 1 above.

Further from figure 1 below, we find that as from 2004, female unemployment has exceeded male unemployment and the gender gap in the labour market has increased considerably since then. This rising female unemployment rate can be partly explained by the decline in the employment level of the EPZ sector due to closure of many firms due to the end of the Multi Fibre Agreement in 2004 (Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Ayrga, 2012). It led to massive structural unemployment, especially for women as the EPZ sector employed quite a large number of women. These women were unable to move to another sector of activity due to lack of appropriate skills and higher educational background. In addition, with the EU sugar reforms, which led to a fall of 36 percent in the sugar prices, the government and private sector adopted the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy to restructure the sugar sector. One of the main measures introduced was the Voluntary Retirement Scheme in 2001 to reduce the labour force in the sugar industry. Many sugar factories closed down and workers, mostly women lost their jobs.

Source: Digest of Labour Statistics, Statistics Mauritius, 2011

This puzzling relationship between good educational performance and female unemployment is explained by various factors. The disparity between male and female unemployment was highest in the lower age group; which reveals that female who could not enter the labour market belong essentially to the younger generation. Female youth unemployment is a major concern for the economy. In addition, marital status has a strong negative effect on woman's decision to enter the labour force (Tandrayen-Ragoobur *et al.*, 2011). It can be argued that the Mauritian woman values their married life more than work. The woman derives greater utility from being married and spending time with her children. However, in Mauritius there is also a lack of facilities in terms of day care centres for children. In fact many women when married and having children have to take care of their offspring and are not able to work. A third factor which contributes to the difficulty of women to access the labour market is their lack of experience. On the job training and previous employment seem to be determining factors in getting a job in Mauritius.

4.2 Percentage of Seats in National Parliament Reserved for Women

Women are gradually gaining more importance in the Mauritian political sphere; however, they remain under-represented in parliament. Though the number of female candidates at the National Legislative Assembly increased nearly fourfold over the past 20 years, they represented only 11 per cent of the candidates at the 2010 National Legislative Assembly Election (Table 3).

Yoon and Bunwaree (2006) analyze the factors that hinder women's legislative representation in Mauritius and these are essentially the low level of women's activism within political parties, an unfavorable electoral system, discriminatory nomination practices, coalition politics, the male-dominant culture, lack of financial resources, and an education that socializes women into gender specific roles as the major barriers. Needless to say, the interconnectedness of some of these barriers compounds the difficulties that women face to penetrate the political arena. In Mauritius, few women occupy high-level decision-making positions within parties. This has decreased the pool of politically well-qualified women for elections. Being underrepresented in decision-making positions within parties, women are often excluded from nomination. Alliances, which have dominated the election outcomes since independence, further challenge the women's chances to get a ticket by stiffening the competition. More people compete for nomination when parties form an alliance. Particularly, when a large number of parties form an alliance, the competition becomes even fiercer and even well qualified and experienced women sometimes cannot get a ticket.

In addition to the above political variables, some socio-economic variables have also negatively affected women's entry into the legislature. Mauritius is a male-dominant country, where women are expected to play their stereotypical roles as mothers and wives. Women often face strong opposition to their political endeavor even from within their own families. Women also lack financial resources to stand as candidates. Election campaigns are very costly, but there is no public funding for campaign expenditures of individual candidates, thus candidates have to finance their campaigns themselves. Lastly, although women's education has improved significantly over the years, the education system continues to socialize women to perform traditional gender roles. Such socialization, coupled with the patriarchal values families inculcate to their children, does not help women aspire to run for elective offices. Domesticity as women's gender identity remains the norm (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006). It was also pointed out from the female candidates and past MPs that hostile campaigns were one of the factors discouraging women from running for parliamentary seats. To countervail dirty campaigns against them, women must have strong support from their husbands, male family members, and male supporters of their parties. The deeply entrenched patriarchy in the Mauritian society manifested itself once again during the 2005 election campaigns with "a number of demeaning images of women," particularly as sex symbols, in posters and caricatures (Chiroro, 2005).

Table 3: Number of Candidates by Sex, National Assembly Elections, 1967 – 2010

	National Assembly Election											
	1959	1963	1967	1976	1982	1983	1987	1991	1995	2000	2005	2010
Number of candidates	159	139	171	369	309	282	359	331	480	535	634	529
Male	159	139	170	355	304	266	334	316	455	494	573	471
Female	0	0	1	14	5	16	25	15	25	41	61	58
Percentage of female candidates	0	0	0.6	3.8	1.6	5.7	7.0	4.5	5.2	7.7	9.6	11.0
Number of elected candidates ¹	40	40	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
Male	40	40	62	59	58	60	57	60	56	58	51	52
Female	0	0	0	3	4	2	5	2	6	4	11	10
Number of parliamentarians	...	....	69	70	66	70	70	66	66	70	70	69
Male	...	....	69	67	61	66	65	64	60	66	58	56
Female	...	....	0	3	5	4	5	2	6	4	12	13
Proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly	...	....	0	4.3	7.6	5.7	7.1	3.0	9.1	5.7	17.1	18.8

Source: Electoral Commissioner's Office

Note:-

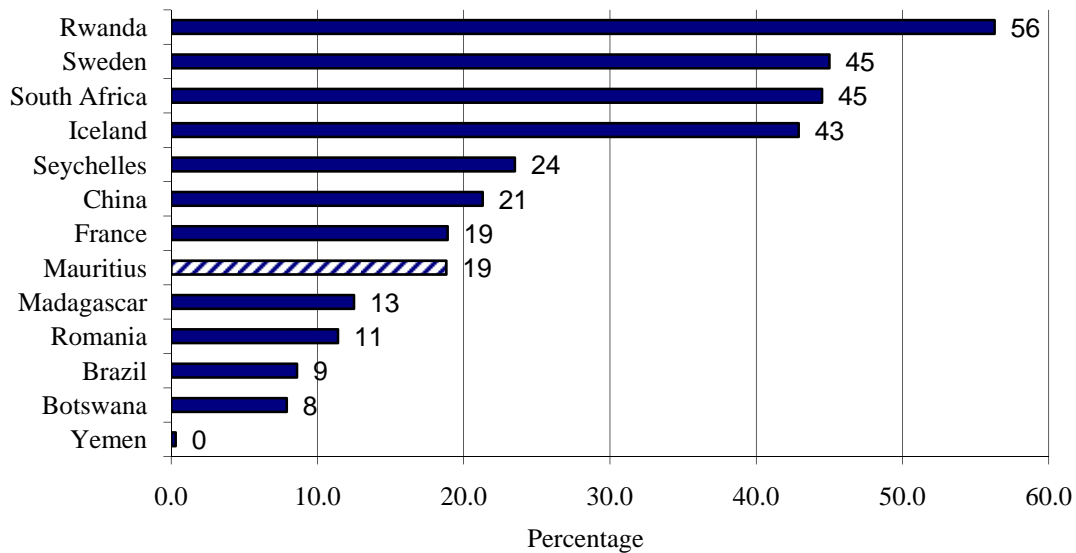
1 - In 1959 and 1963, there was only one elected candidate per constituency, thereafter the number of elected candidate per constituency was three.

... Data not available

From table 3 above, we note that the number of candidates increased from 171 in 1967 to 634 in 2005 but decreased to 529 in 2010; during these periods, the highest number of candidates was noted in 2005 and lowest in 1967. In the 1967 election, there was only one female candidate (Constituency No. 18 - Belle Rose and Quatre-Bornes); this number reached 61 in 2005 and then decreased to 58 in 2010. The percentage of female candidates stood at 11.0 per cent in 2010

compared to 0.6 per cent in 1967. There has also been appreciable increase (from 6.1 per cent in 2000 to 18.8 per cent in 2010) in the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. Further, in the same year, there were only 3 women ministers out of a total of 25 (12 per cent). Mauritius is at par with France regarding female representation in parliament (19.0 per cent). Rwanda had the highest proportion of women in parliament (56.0 per cent) with more women than men among parliamentarians (Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Percentage of Women in Parliament by Country, 2007-10



Source: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

As from 2005 and 2010 elections became a watershed in the history of female legislative representation in Mauritius. The number of women increased from four in 2000 to 12 and 13 in 2005 and 2010 respectively. This increase is attributed to a mix of factors namely the political experience of some of the female candidates, the role of civil society, the contagion effect, candidate's compatibility with the ethnic/caste profile of constituency, and effective election campaigns of some female candidates. The political experience of some women helped them get a ticket from their parties and get elected. While some women nominated by the major parties were relatively new comers to the political arena, others already had political experience in the legislature, cabinet, or municipalities, and were nationally well known. Such name recognition is an advantage particularly in Mauritius, where political parties announce their candidates only less than a month before the election, and do not give them sufficient time to gain name recognition if they are not already well-known (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006).

In addition, Chiroro (2005) states that 'the rise of female representation in the National Assembly in 2005 can be attributed to the pressures from civil society'. Approaching the election, civil society organizations, particularly women's NGOs, brought the issue of severe under-representation of women in Mauritian politics to the forefront by organizing a march, workshops, and forums. The Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the 1997 Declaration on Gender and Development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which sets a 30 per cent target for women for all decision-making positions, have served the various women's groups as a foundation for their actions. Women's NGOs pointed out that the Mauritian government has done very little to rectify the gender imbalance in politics despite its ratification of these international conventions (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006).

Further, in multiparty systems, competition tends to influence political parties to emulate the policies of their rival parties. In reference to gender quotas, when one party in a system adopts quotas, competing parties tend to follow suit because they “fear losing women’s votes if they do not match this policy (Caul, 2001). The same can be true for nominating female candidates in countries like Mauritius, which has no gender quotas. Political parties tend to match the policy of their rivals in fielding female candidates so as not to alienate female voters. This matching strategy becomes particularly contagious when the media calls attention to the problem of gender imbalance in politics and when NGOs insist upon rectification. In fact in 2010, the "alliance of the future" headed by the Labour Party fielded 13 women, about 22 per cent after the main opposition party (known as the "alliance of the heart") fielded eight out of 60 does make only slightly more than 13 per cent. Hence, political parties and alliances felt compelled to field more female candidates because they did not want to be seen as anti-women and adopted a ‘wait and see’ approach to determine the number of their female candidates (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006).

Thus the ‘invisibility’ of women in politics, and by extension in Parliament, is a concern and has been cited as ‘a grave democratic deficit’ and the present electoral system, ‘will never do justice to the true role of women in society and will never enhance the empowerment of women’ (Sachs et al, 2001). Women’s parliamentary representation can make a difference in the lives of women (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006). Even an extreme minority of women in parliament can improve the lives of women by bringing women’s issues forward to get the legislation process started and by driving the process to the legislation. Though the male dominant parliamentary environment appears to be growing more inclusive, there seems to be more parliamentary question time devoted to the issues affecting women’s lives (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006).

4.3 Voter Turnout among Registered Females

Voter turnout which is the percentage of voters at an election is often used as an indicator of democracy and political stability. The crude assumption is that the higher the turnout, the better is the state of democracy and political stability. When used for international comparison, voter turnout as a governance indicator has to be interpreted with caution. Though broadly speaking, the indicator can be used to indicate the level of democracy, a high voter turnout may not necessarily be the result of a high level of democracy; this could be the result of compulsory voting by law. In the same vein, a low voter turnout could also indicate that the people are not interested in voting. Based on data collected at the Electoral Commission Office on National Assembly Elections, Mauritius had a voter turnout of around 78 per cent in 2010. Over the period 2000 to 2010, the percentage of voters hovered at around 80 per cent (see Table 4 below).

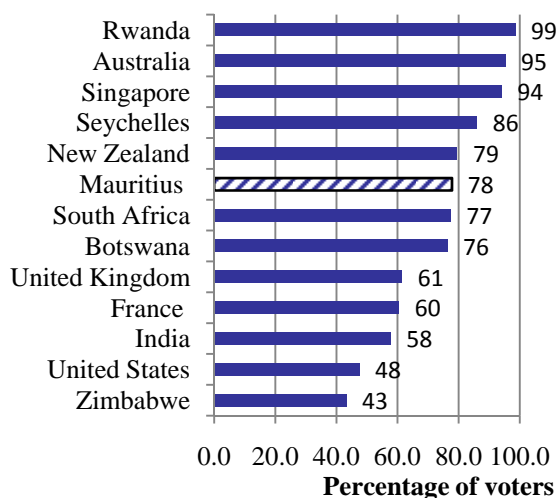
Table 4: Percentage of voters, Mauritius, National Assembly Elections 2000 – 2010

	National Assemble Election		
	2000	2005	2010
Number of Registered Electors	779,431	817,305	879,897
Number of Voters	630,292	666,298	684,768
Percentage of Voters (%)	80.9	81.5	77.8

Source: Electoral Commissioner’s Office

At the international level, based on data published by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) for the period 2004 and 2010, Rwanda (99 per cent) had the highest voter turnout (Figure 3 below). Mauritius is among the group of countries comprising New Zealand, South Africa and Botswana with a voter turnout of ranging between 75 per cent and 80 per cent.

Figure 3: Percentage of voters by selected country, Parliamentary Elections 2004 - 2010



Source : <http://www.idea.int/>

Women in Mauritius gained the right to vote and the right to stand for elections in 1956. Data on the number of voters by sex was collected for the first time in 2010, indicating that the participation of females at the voting was higher than that of males. The sex ratio showing the number of females per 100 males worked out to 104.0 (Statistics Mauritius, 2010). In 2010, Constituency No. 14 - Savanne and Black River had the largest number of electors (58,341) while Constituency No. 3 - Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East had the smallest number of electors (22,448). For the same period, the percentage of voters was highest in Constituency No. 13 – Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac (83.4 per cent) and lowest in Constituency No. 1 – Grand River North West and Port Louis West (72.4 per cent). Moreover, the participation of females at the voting was higher than males for all constituencies, except for Constituency No. 3 – Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East (Electoral Commissioner’s Office, 2010). In fact, a new organization called Women in Politics was active in encouraging women’s involvement in the 2010 election. Nevertheless, scholars like Chiroro (2005) claim that the democratic deficit in Mauritius lies in the under-representation of women in many fields.

4.4 Prevalence of Women in Poor Districts

In the context of the African continent, Mauritius stands out as a social, economic and development success story. Although severe poverty is rare in Mauritius as compared to other parts of Africa, there is a minority of very poor households in the country. In the wake of the recent exposure to global competition, and the consequent decline in the production of sugar and textiles for export, rural poverty is on the rise across the country. Unemployment is increasing, and those who are already disadvantaged are sinking into deeper poverty. Overall, 10 per cent of Mauritians are estimated to be living in poverty, but the figure may be substantially higher. Women are still the most vulnerable group having the most insecure jobs, the lowest salaries, longer unemployment periods and sufferers of persistent domestic violence.

Cultural factors also come into play and gender equality has not been a necessity in the minds of all Mauritians until recently. Female headed households are more likely to be poor than male headed households (Statistics Mauritius, 2007). In 2006/07¹⁰⁴, poverty incidence among female

¹⁰⁴ The last Household Budget Survey was conducted in 2007, the next one will be made available in 2013

headed households worked out to 11.9 per cent compared to 7.0 per cent among male headed households. Over 50 per cent of the female headed poor households were single parent households with unmarried children only. From 2001/02 to 2006/07 poverty incidence among female headed households dropped (from 14.1 per cent to 11.9 per cent), but rose among male headed households (from 6.5 per cent to 7.0 per cent). This is shown in Figure 4 below.

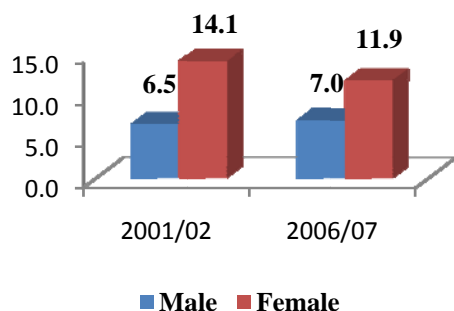


Figure 4: Percentage of Households by Sex of Head, HBS 2001/02 and HBS 2006/07

Source: Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2006/07

Further, poor households were more likely to be headed by women than all households. In 2006/07, the proportion of female heads of households was 26.9 per cent in poor households against 18.0 per cent in all households. Between 2001/02 and 2006/07 the proportion of female heads of poor households decreased from 29.5 per cent to 26.9 per cent, whereas for male heads, the proportion increased from 70.5 per cent to 73.1 per cent (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Distribution (%) of Head of Poor Households and all Households by Sex, HBS 2001/02 and 2006/07

Sex of Head	2001/02		2006/07	
	Poor Households	All Households	Poor Households	All Households
Male	70.5	83.9	73.1	82.0
Female	29.5	16.1	26.9	18.0
Both sexes	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2006/07

In addition, from Table 6 below, we note that females were more predominant in poor households (52.9 per cent) than in all households (50.6 per cent). The sex ratio (number of males per 100 females) was estimated at 89.0 among poor households against 97.6 among all households. Between 2001/02 and 2006/07, the sex ratio declined from 91.9 to 89.0 for poor households and from 98.7 to 97.6 among all households.

Table 6: Distribution (%) of Persons in Poor Households and all Households by Sex, HBS 2001/02 and 2006/07

Sex of Head	2001/02		2006/07	
	Poor Households	All Households	Poor Households	All Households
Male	47.9	49.7	47.1	49.4
Female	52.1	50.3	52.9	50.6
Both sexes	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sex Ratio	91.9	98.7	89.0	97.6

Source: Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2006/07

In fact, there is evidence that income of female-headed household is on average 23.5 percent and 22.6 percent lower than that of their male counterparts over the respective periods of 2001/02 and 2006/07 (Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Kasseeah, *forthcoming*). The same study shows that on the expenditure side, female-headed households are significantly consumption or expenditure poor than the male heads. The consumption of female-headed households is on average 17 percent below the consumption of male-headed households. In addition, the probability of being poor is much higher for women heads relative to their male counterparts for both periods of study. The probability of female heads being poor increases over the years. A breakdown of female heads by marital status shows that female divorced heads of households are more likely to be in poverty. Over the two surveys, from 2001/02 to 2006/07, the probability of being poor rises for all female heads irrespective of their marital status. Hence, ever more poverty in Mauritius is bearing a woman face where women-headed households are increasingly becoming worse off (Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Kasseeah, *forthcoming*).

5. CONCLUSION

The paper argues that gender equality in decision-making fora is vital, both for enabling far-reaching social change and for empowering people excluded from decision making on the grounds of gender characteristics. There has been some progress in Mauritius in redressing the gender imbalance in national and local governance processes and institutions but more is still to be achieved. Using gender-sensitive governance indicators for Mauritius, namely the gender gap index; voter turnout among registered females; prevalence of women in poor districts and the percentage of seats in National Parliament reserved for women, we analyse the participation of women in the political, economic and social arena in the country.

We first observe that the overall gender gap index for Mauritius has increased over the years from 2006 to 2011, implying an improvement towards equality in all fields including education, economic participation, health and political attainment. However the score for economic participation and political attainment remain very low. In terms of economic participation, we know a rising trend in the female unemployment rate. Though girls' performance is better than boys at all levels starting from primary education to tertiary level, access to job opportunities is a real hurdle for women. A higher unemployment rate is observed essentially for young women who have either just completed a University degree or their secondary schooling. This puzzling relationship between good educational performance and female unemployment is explained by different factors. In fact, female who could not enter the labour market belong essentially to the younger generation who lacks experience and training. In addition, marital status has a strong negative effect on woman's decision to enter the labour force. Mauritian woman values their married life more than work and derives greater utility from being married and spending time with her children. There is also in Mauritius a lack of facilities in terms of day care centres for children. Better day care services and on the job training and previous employment seem to be determining factors in enhancing women participation in the economy.

Second, in the political arena, we note that the 'invisibility' of women, and by extension in Parliament, is a concern and has been cited as 'a grave democratic deficit' for the country (Sachs et al, 2002). In recent years civil society groups, particularly those comprising women, have begun advocacy work, but much remains to be done. Mauritius has been adept at the politics of recognition of different ethnic groups but this approach has not addressed the issue of women. The matter is not simply numerical (that is, the presence of women in politics) but also one of social transformation (the politics of ideas). Politicians and ordinary citizens increasingly recognize the importance of having more women in Parliament, but resistance persists in some quarters. The political parties are conscious of the need to promote intra-party gender equality but there is still concern that women have minimal impact on other party matters, which remain male-dominated. In addition, there exist a mix of factors that hinder women's legislative representation in Mauritius, like the low level of women's activism within political parties, an unfavorable electoral system, discriminatory nomination practices, coalition politics, the male-dominant culture, lack of financial resources, and an education that socializes women into gender specific roles as the major barriers. The interconnectedness of some

of these barriers further compounds the difficulties that women face to penetrate the political arena. There is a need to promote women's parliamentary representation as it can make a difference in the lives of women in the country. Even an extreme minority of women in parliament can improve the lives of women by bringing women's issues forward to get the legislation process started and by driving the process to the legislation (Yoon and Bunwaree, 2006).

Further, female headed households are among the poorest in Mauritius. Studies indicate that economic circumstances often result in such households finding themselves in a vicious circle of poverty from one generation to another. It is only through education, sensitisation and direct empowerment that the vicious circle of lack of education, poverty and unstable family relationships can be broken. Because of the process of modernisation and development which is taking place in Mauritius, the existing inequalities are likely to exacerbate and effective policies have to be implemented. Moreover, the problem of poverty is associated with social exclusion and marginalisation of some sections of the society. Hence, female-headed households deserve special attention as they are mostly headed by widowed or divorced/separated women caring for their families on their own and they are more vulnerable and likely to be poor. The specificities of female-headed households should be taken into consideration in the design of social programmes targeting poverty reduction. There is a need for a holistic approach to the design and implementation of targeted social programs. These should include aspects such as access to housing, childcare facilities, literacy, life skills and skills development programmes, employment services among others. Social welfare mechanisms need to be strengthened for all, but an effective long-term anti-poverty strategy should address itself to the enhancement of women's entitlements and capabilities.

Ultimately, gender-sensitive governance will mean a world with better choices, opportunities, access to resources and life outcomes for women, through governance policies and actions that challenge entrenched gender inequalities in society and are supported by strong accountability mechanisms. Though, there has been some progress in redressing the gender imbalance in national and local governance processes and institutions, reforms need to be viewed as one part of a far more comprehensive process that involves governance institutions addressing ways in which they reinforce gender inequalities through their own practices.

Increasing the number of women in positions of authority will only result in a more equitable system of governance if the quality of their participation is guaranteed. This requires a shift in assumptions about the roles women and marginalised men should play in governance processes, and the creation of an environment where people are viewed in terms of their capacity rather than their gender or sexuality. It requires the critical assessment of institutions and institutional relationships at global, national and local levels, the introduction of new, gender-equitable ways of working, and a commitment to monitoring their effectiveness. Identifying barriers to gender equality in institutional culture and relationships can provide entry points for change, but without the will for transformation, gender-sensitive policies and mainstreaming strategies can soon evaporate. Thus, it is important to enable clear, shared understandings around the need for gender equality across governance institutions on global, national and local levels.

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Proposed measures to ensure accountability at all levels in the Public and Private sectors.



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This year will mark the forty fourth anniversary of independent Mauritius, yet few people realize that our nation has reached adulthood. The perception that we still need others, foreigners in

particular, to help us make decisions about our own future and that of the coming generations still persists in the minds of many. The acceptance that others know better what is good and desirable for us is so deep-rooted that many seem to adopt an apathetic attitude towards any life events. Social, political, economic and cultural systems inherited and influenced by the colonial masters are still alive. Divisions, vehemently denied by a few, but favored by many, are alive and poison the life of so many people. The divide and rule policy taught by the earlier governors has turned out to be a useful tool in the hands of the present governors. Most of the points of views highlighted above are brought to attention in the press; while everyday events illustrate the veracity of the opinion expressed. Conflicts at all levels are revealed, cases of alleged corruption brought to notice, and examples of bad practices and poor management are reported every now and then. Despite the hue and cry about the prevailing state of affairs, few have the courage to stand up and champion the cause of freedom and justice. Attempts at bringing changes in the mindset, attitudes and behavior of people are so few and timid that they die down as soon as they are born. There seem to be a lot more to say on matters of accountability, corruption, conflict management and good governance. This paper is presented as an attempt to bring those concerned to start thinking on ways and means to do away with practices that create confusion and distrust in the minds of our younger generations.

Key words: independence, systems, policies, attitudes, mindset, accountability, corruption.

I. What is Accountability?

Defined as “The obligation of an individual or organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner. It also includes the responsibility for money or other entrusted property”. (G. ads 2012)

Accountability is one of the major aspect which guarantees good governance. Unfortunately, year in year out, despite the alarm signal of teams of auditors and other organizations and individuals, cases of poor governance at all levels still persist. People in authority flout the basic principles of trust and accountability to the detriment of, not only the organization they serve, but of the population in general. Although, many if not all persons in authority take the oath to serve the people and the nation to the best of their abilities without favors or prejudice. Yet, cases of favouritism, injustice, discrimination, corruption and other undesirable practices become the salient features within the first weeks and months after their installation.

Accountability, transparence, responsibility, trust and honesty become empty concepts. It seems that the negative urge to go against the natural state of things is deep-rooted in the nature of man. Since creation, the evil has always been depicted as having human features, and apt to indulge in wrong

actions, despite being aware of the consequences. It also appears that it is always after the damages have been done that the wrong is brought to light.

It is said that man is born good, but circumstances make him/her what he/she becomes. We cannot change the nature of human beings, but we can at least influence the nurturing aspects to provide the proper approaches in relation to acceptable behavioral patterns in various situations. One of the major tools at our disposal is education with an “E”. Do we have such systems that will guarantee that all our citizens will, once educated, become accountable to organizations, activities, responsibilities, results and trust? If the answer is positive, then we should strive to promote such systems, and hence, be sure to have people we can trust at the head of organizations – family, society, school, religion, governments, courts of justice, and other such organizations responsible for the overall welfare of the population. This point of view seems to be a utopia, as it leads to creating an ideal society.

II. Can People be made to be Accountable?

As pointed out earlier, there is hope to reach a stage when people would become accountable, but the road seem to covered with obstacles, in view of the nature of human beings. It is believed that, among all the living creatures on earth, man is the only one that is perfectible. Hence, there is always hope, that as we move along, we can expect the forthcoming generations to comprise of persons of a different caliber, capable of being accountable in desired fields of Human Endeavour. The mechanisms to ensure democracy, meritocracy, equal opportunities and political, economic, social systems to safeguard the rights and prerogatives of one and all, are already in place. The missing link is the will to implement these mechanisms to create such a society where the respect of institutions, rule of law, and the paths of natural law are respected. Deserving individuals should never have the feeling that they have been deprived of their legitimate human rights. Seen from a layman’s viewpoint, there seem to be no obstacle to the successful implementation of such mechanisms, ensuring that no individual be deprived of opportunities in relation to their aspirations and expectations. One always wonders, in the face of such happenings, on the reasons that bring institutions and individuals to make decisions which deliberately deprive members of the population from their dues. In many cases, the reasons given are so remote, but strongly justified by the decision makers that, prospects for protest seem to be out of this world. Victims of such treatment have no other recourse than to blame themselves for their fate. Destiny appears to be the only plausible reason for not acquiring what one feels as being a well deserved and legitimate reward. There results a feeling that some people are beyond the remit of accountability; that they possess the power to decide on the fate of others without having to be accountable to any other living beings. The resentment, frustration, helplessness, and hopelessness of the victims fill them with a deep feeling of rejection and a total absence of trust in the social institutions. It seems that the number of frustrated will increase if no measures are taken to create the trust and beliefs in the minds of the population. A change in mindset is more than necessary to redress the prevailing conditions.

III. Need for Code of Ethics for All

Ethics is a concept that deals with what is good or bad, right or wrong and the conduct of morals of all human beings. Defined by Chapman R.A.(1993) as the basic principles of the right action and the rules of conduct, According to UNDESA(2000), public service ethics are broad norms that delineate how public servants..... Should, exercise judgment and discretion in carrying out their official duties. This concept is either misunderstood or ignored by many in the delivery of service, both in the public and the private sector.

Attempts made to provide both the private and the public sectors with Code of Ethics have had mitigated effects, as shown by audit reports on practices in all sectors of human activities. There is an urgent need to set things into perspectives in relation to the existing codes of practice. Some years

back, a code of conduct and desired practices for the Prime Minister, Ministers and other Members of the Parliament was sent to all concerned, and was even published on the first page of a local press. This was presented in reply to requests from all quarters for the urgent need for such an instrument to regulate the practices of our governors. There was little or almost no major interest in the thing as the expectations that an attempt to provide such a document was remote. The conjuncture was believed to be inappropriate as most of those in place made it clear that they had no lessons to receive from anyone. Matters stood as they were.

Things seemed to change. The international conditions and local state of affairs, flourishing public and private endeavors, full employment, social stability, overall satisfaction, contributed to set up the scene for a period of abundance. There were no worries as there were plenty to spend, and sometimes lavishly. Then, we were caught by the ups and downs of human society. The period of plenty was soon over, and we had to face the hard realities of life, reminded so vividly by the famous ant and grasshopper fable. Instead of saving for the future, we wasted the best we possessed. Like most of other countries we indebted ourselves.

The consequences are what we are witnessing. But, very few realize that by creating a better world now, we are condemning the coming generations to be debtors for the rest of their lives. The malpractices based on creating the impression of a dream-world will turn out to be a real nightmare when we wake up. To stop the hemorrhage now, measures should be taken to establish ethical practices at all levels of our society. Truth, trust, honesty, transparency, and frankness should prevail. One of the conditions, if not, the only one to guarantee the preservation of our society, and preventing it from facing the same fate of social unrest due to fraud, corruption, malpractices and other social ills as have been the fate of so many countries, is the establishment of such code of practice that will bring back trust in our people and institutions.

IV. Initiating Action to Reinforce Ethical Behavior.

The attention of local, national and international authorities has been attracted to the various scandals affecting the public sector all over the world. Few countries have been spared by the deteriorating ethical behaviors of public officers. The absence and flouting of basic ethical considerations, accountability, transparency, and integrity resulting in corrupt practices and mismanagement has poisoned the various sectors of public activity. Next to ethical behavior stands integrity as defined by Carter S.L. (1996), which Halfon .M. (1989) describes as “a person’s dedication to the pursuit of a moral life and their intellectual responsibility in seeking to understand the demands of such life”.

Hence, reinforcing integrity, will entail that people should exhibit such behaviors that reflect accountability, honesty, moral responsibility and professionalism. This approach requires value-based management, where man is at the centre of attention, and behaviors reflect the values that guide the public service. As highlighted by UNDESA, (2000), loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness, impartiality, and other values specific to the public services of individual countries should be inculcated to public officers who join the service.

Therefore, training people who wish to join sectors of activity in the public and/or private where ethical behavior will be the key concept becomes mandatory. The question which arises is: Will training guarantee that each and everyone concerned will adopt ethical behaviors and abide by values mentioned above? We have no immediate answer to this question. The OECD Council adopted a “Recommendation on Improving Ethical Conduct in the Public Service” on 23rd April 1998. The Public Management Committee, has established twelve Principles for Managing Ethics in the Public Services, and suggested that governments should adopt these to the specific prevailing political, administrative and cultural circumstances.

There is therefore, need for concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders to work towards the establishment of institutions and systems to promote ethical conduct in the Public Service. These measures will not be effective, unless other mechanisms are not put in place.

V. Establishing a System of Sanctions

Almost all countries in the world, confronted with the problems of malpractices resulting in the emergence of undesirable social ills such as fraud, corruption, favoritism and other unethical behaviors, have established mechanisms to fight these ills. The governments in place have in their own ways taken several measures to ensure that both public and private organizations evolve codes of conduct to ensure ethical practices among their employers and employees. Official structures such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption ICAC, the Ombudsman/Ombudsperson, the Public Accounts Committee, the Audit Bureau, the FSC, the PSC, the Equal opportunities Commission, and several others have been in place for some time now and have been functioning.

Although thought as being independent, most, if not all of them are directly or indirectly influenced by either political, social, cultural or economic factors or strong lobbies which affect their proper functioning. These mechanisms should be staffed with competent and dedicated persons. In many cases, poor human resource management and other related factors seem to be the cause of malfunctioning of these structures, and hence decisions to sanction any undesirable conduct have been seen to be difficult to implement. Many of those who have been sanctioned are still being financially maintained in the absence of reliable procedures to investigate and to take appropriate actions using the existing mechanisms. There is a felt need that effective and efficient mechanisms to enforce codes of conduct in both public and private institutions be established. Hence, measures should be taken to ensure that the existing codes are actually brought to the attention of all concerned periodically through in-service training sessions and continuing sensitization campaigns. It is also believed that strong and consistent incentives be used to help managers enforce the relevant code of conduct. Any dormant or yearly revived code of conduct is useless.

The mechanisms to be put in place should have legal and institutional procedures backed up by administrative procedures to deal with any cases of corrupt practices as defined by the codes of ethics.

VI. Doing away with Corrupt Practices

Countries all over the world face the same challenges in the management of public service and have to deal with the problems posed by corrupt practices in institutions under governmental administration. Even non-governmental organizations are nowadays affected by the same problems as reflected in recent articles on the management of activities related to these NGO's. The solution lies in the adoption of the Principles for Managing Ethics in The Public Service (PUMA Policy Brief No.4. 1998) mentioned earlier. The following principles have been exposed in the brief:

- Ethical standards for public service should be clear.
- Ethical standards should be reflected in the legal framework.
- Ethical guidance should be available to public servants.
- Public servants should know their rights and obligations when exposing wrongdoings.
- Political commitment to ethics should reinforce the ethical conduct of public servants.
- The decision-making process should be transparent and open to scrutiny.
- There should be clear guidelines for interaction between the public and private sectors.
- Managers should demonstrate and promote ethical conduct..
- Management policies, procedures and practices should promote ethical conduct.
- Public service conditions and management of human resources should promote ethical conduct.
- Adequate accountability mechanisms should be in place within the public service.
- Appropriate procedures and sanctions should exist to deal with misconduct.

Over fourteen years have elapsed since these “Principles were developed with the help of a Reference Group, discussed at the Public Management Committee of the OECD and reviewed at a Symposium held on 4-5 November 1997 in Paris. After a final review by the Committee in March 1998, the OECD Council approved them and issued a Recommendation on 23 April 1998”. The developing countries have, during a workshop on “Enhancing Professionalization of Human Resource Management in the Public Service in Africa” held in Cotonou, Republic of Benin – 12 to 16 April 2010, dealt with some of the issues related to good governance, accountability, conflict management and anti-corruption. The opportunity to compare what is being proposed by the OECD countries and the situation in African countries was facilitated through the participation and contribution of the UN, UNDP, AAPAM (African Association of Public Administration and Management), AMDIN (African Management Development Institute Network), and APS-HRMnet (Africa Public Sector- HRM network).

The African Leaders were able to appreciate the effort to promote accountability, transparency, integrity through the establishment of principles of good governance in the public and private sectors. Hopefully, the lesson has been learned and the forthcoming leaders and administrators will take necessary actions to curb the effects of mismanagement and malpractices in governmental and non-governmental organizations.

VII. Abolishing Political Appointments

One of the major ills in many developing countries has been the appointment or promotion of people adhering to party politics at the head of public, private and semi-public institutions. This practice defeats the principles as proposed earlier, and which “identify the functions of guidance, management or control against which public ethics management systems can be checked”. The ethical values such as accountability, transparency, integrity, responsibility and other professional qualities to be found in public service officers will be difficult to gauge, as such officers would feel protected by the political masters and allow themselves to indulge in illicit practices. They are difficult to control in the absence of a strong organizational culture and proper standards of conduct. The need for a sound ethics management system is deeply felt as more cases of misconduct are being reported, but few of them sanctioned. Because of the practice mentioned above, there seem to be a decline of confidence in the authorities and trust in social institutions is on the decrease. Misconduct and other malpractices persist to the detriment of the general public as well as the service institution itself.

It seems that there is no immediate remedy to the phenomenon, despite the existence of well established codes of conduct and mechanisms to prevent misconduct and to combat corruption and other malpractices.

VIII. Putting Right People in the Right Places.

Some thirty years back, there was an interesting approach to staffing our institutions – political, social, cultural, legal, economic and financial through what many believed to be the magic formula called “meritocracy”. At last people were going to be recognized according to their (real), qualification/s, experience, competence and profile. For the first time people would be selected for filling of posts in the public and private sector, irrespective of the discriminatory criteria of race, caste, color, ethnic or other/s. At last we were going to see the right people in the right places. In the beginning of the era, it seemed to be that, but as time passed, the head hunting game was on again. The anguish and fear linked with identifying oneself with a political color was back. Competence and meritocracy suddenly had a color. We were back to the time of the barter system, when everything had to be bargained.

Nothing has changed. We are still like the apple. Nice looking and beautiful at the surface, but eaten by hideous worms from the inside. Strong at the surface as far as the crust is hard. Waiting to see the

real waste and rot when the surface will no longer be able to protect the pulp. The absence of the will to implement the existing ethics management systems, to render effective the structures established to prevent misconduct and to combat fraud and corruption is at the basis of the lack of trust of people in the institutions. It is of prime importance to bring back the trust of the population in the values of the public and private institution. The lack of trust of only one person in any public institution is too much. Getting back that trust should be the major task of our leaders and managers, if we want to get a public service with employers and employees imbued with integrity, accountability and honesty and ready to work according to the code of ethics established since a long time.

IX. Concluding Remarks

The main aim of this short paper is to create a need to think on the heritage we are leaving for the coming generations in terms of values in relation to themselves and to their professional activities; the values that make human beings human - honesty, commitment, respect, integrity, compassion, acceptance love and peace. At the same time emphasizing the need to adopt ethical behaviors such as integrity, accountability, transparency while assuming posts of responsibility in either public or private institutions.

Views expressed in the above pages are based on readings and on personal experience in the public and private sectors and through contacts with professionals from public, private and para-statal bodies. The general impression of those encountered is that there is scope for implementing ethics management systems in almost all sectors of professional activities within the existing structures. It is only the will to implement, to prevent and to sanction which is missing.

Authorities should realize that by sanctioning undesirable behavior among public and private officers, they will be giving the right signal to those who indulge in unethical behaviors, and to those who would be tempted to do the same.

By ignoring or tolerating those who are in all evidence guilty of such conduct, the authorities are not only promoting such attitudes and behavior, but encouraging others to try out.

To do away with corruption, conflict, transgression of rules of transparency, integrity, accountability, and unethical behaviors among public and private officers, authorities should be prepared to take bold decisions. It is advisable to sacrifice a few rotten ones, to protect the majority, than to protect a few to the detriment of them all.

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Biography



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An investigation of the nexus between the electoral system and governance structure in Mauritius

Tania Diolle and Riad Sultan

INTRODUCTION

The choice of an electoral system for any country is not a simple one. If taken in a vacuum an electoral system can be seen as a mechanism which simply translates votes casted by citizens into seats in the legislature at the national or sub national levels. In 1954, Maurice Duverner's went beyond this simple relationship and established that a single member plurality system-referred to as the First Past the Post System – results in two big political parties while the proportional system tends to produce smaller parties. Since Duverner there has been extensive theoretical and empirical work to prove that the impact of the electoral system goes beyond this simple relationship (translating votes casted into parliamentarian seats).



The key in understanding the linkages between the electoral system and the governance structure of a country lies in unraveling the package behind which a politician or a political party gets into power (Menocal, 2011.P.2). In this way more insight into how the political actor operates and what interest drives him sheds light on how to avoid electoral malpractices and bad governance. An electoral system has to be seen as operating within a broader national governance framework and as such influences key governance dimensions and dynamics. The most studied dimension of governance influenced by the electoral system is the party system .The electoral system shapes the party system of a country which directly influence key governance dynamics and dimensions which are representativeness, government effectiveness, and stability. In the Mauritian context the link between representativeness and government stability and effectiveness is determinant because of the ethno political cleavages that emerged from the 'ethnicization' of the Mauritian electoral system.

The electoral package that political actors have to adopt determines their incentives structure thus affecting their behaviours in and outside the government. For example the electoral system has considerable effects on the fragmentation of the party system, which in turn affects government effectiveness once the party gets into power. The electoral system also has the power to ease or exacerbate conflicts between the contestants or the political constituencies. Finally the electoral system also determines to whom the political contestant feels accountable to and therefore how and to whom the public resources will be allocated.

The Republic of Mauritius, a grouping of islands of 1,969 Km² with a multi ethnic population estimated at nearly 1.3 million people, has proven economically resilient and relatively peaceful since its independence. While many African countries sunk in dictatorships, ethnic violence, and poor economic performance, Mauritius has moved from the status of least developed country to that of upper middle income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 15000 in 2011 and relatively high human development indicators¹⁰⁵. Mauritius has been among the most competitive African countries for years and in 2011 ranked 55 out of 139 countries in the Global Competitiveness index of the World Economic Forum. In addition Mauritius has been ranked as the 1st African country in terms of good governance in the Mo Ibrahim governance index. Mauritian citizens enjoy political rights and civil liberties comparable to well established democracies such as France or Germany (Darga,

¹⁰⁵ Web page with all the indicators

2004.P1:World Bank 1998, Freedom House 2001). Elections have been regularly held since 1968 except for a brief spot on the Mauritian democratic history when the elections were suspended in 1972. Mauritius achieved all this as a state despite its burdening colonial heritage namely a deeply divided society and very gloomy economic prospects. For all the reasons mentioned above Mauritius presents itself as an ideal case study to investigate the linkages between the electoral system and representativeness, government effectiveness and accountability.

The objective of this paper is to prove the linkages between the Mauritian electoral system and government effectiveness, management of conflicts and the public policy direction; the provision of public goods. This paper takes a rational choice framework perspective that emphasizes the structural incentives and constraints placed on voters and politicians by the electoral system. Section one is a description of the Mauritian Electoral System where its main features are laid out. Section two provides an analysis to establish how the Mauritian electoral system is linked to representativeness, government effectiveness and accountability. Section two also attempts to establish the impact of the electoral system on the three governance dimension in light of previous studies on the subject.

Defining Governance

Governance is an abstract concept with multiple applications. The term of governance has been applied to different types of organizations evolving in different contexts and with very different aims and objectives; egs are business firms, governments and international organisations. This abstract use of the term governance implies that it can be used for both nongovernmental and governmental organizations. However for the purpose of this paper we will use political governance as referring to the link between the state and its citizens. The main reason behind this choice is the subject of the paper, the linkages between an electoral system and the governance of a country. The core of the analysis, the electoral system, is a mechanism which has been put in place to select citizens who will be responsible for the running of a country. The whole purpose of organizing elections is to allow citizens to choose representatives who will be work in their best interests.

The concept of political governance has been studied at both the Macro and Micro level by researchers and scholars. At the Macro level governance have been categorized as six broad dimensions by Kaufman, Kraay and Mastruzzi for the World Bank Governance Indicators. These broad dimensions are i) Voice & Accountability, ii) Political Stability and Lack of Violence/Terrorism, iii) Government Effectiveness, iv) Regulatory Quality, v) Rule of Law, and vi) Control of Corruption. While this categorisation has been extensively used by scholars as a reference for political science studies and papers, we observe that when it comes to the study of plurality/majority electoral systems the aspects of governance which are the most studied are government stability and effectiveness. The underlying reason behind is that the plurality/majority electoral system are argued by its proponents as favouring strong stable governments. It is also argued that plurality/majority systems such as the British First Past the Post, which produces one party governments, responds to one of the most important criterion when choosing an electoral system is government effectiveness (Norris, 1997, P.304). By government effectiveness they refer to the capacity of the state to be responsive to its citizens' needs.

The electoral system of the country, Mauritius, which is the subject of this paper has been classified by some as being First Past the Post (Sithanen,2012;Darga,2008 ;Buwaree, 2005&2002) and other as Block Vote system. The difference between the Block Vote and the First Past the Post is the district magnitude; otherwise they are similar in their applications. In practice the Mauritian electoral system belongs to the plurality/ majority family but nonetheless encompass some elements of Proportional Representation system through the Best Loser system. When talking about governance in this paper it seems appropriate to refer to government stability and government effectiveness as a measure since they are the most obvious and important criteria of the type of electoral system adopted by Mauritius.

The Rational Choice Theory

Unraveling the package behind which a politician or a political party gets into power to understand the linkages between the electoral system and the governance implies that there is a basic assumption

that the politician or the political party are rational actors whose behavior are dictated by rules which were set down by the electoral system. This basic assumption of rationality has been conceptualized under the rational choice theory.

The Rational Choice theory originates from the economics doctrine that individuals make rational choice. This approach was used for political analysis after the Second World War. Duverner was one of the first to use the Rational Choice theory to explain elections and actors' behavior. Using

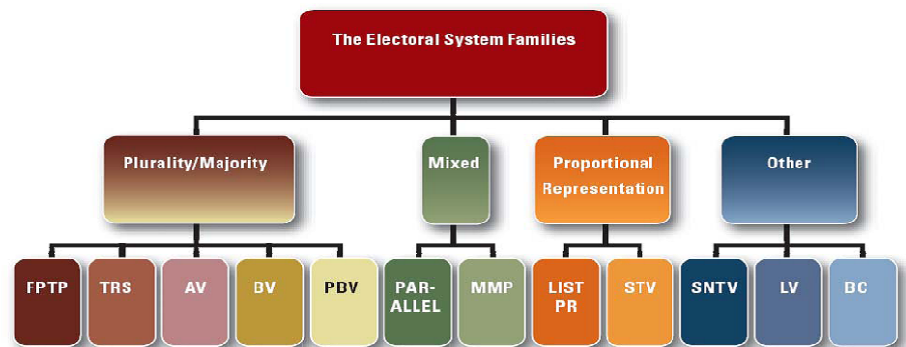


Fig 1 : Source: Reynolds et al.

the Rational choice he suggested what became a canonical statement, a two parties system was more likely to emerge from the first past the post system and that coalition's government were more likely to emerge from proportional representation system. The Rational Choice analysis is based on how incentives and constraints affect human behavior. The fundamentals of the rational choice framework can be summarized as being that the political actor is a rational actor who responds to incentives and constraints. Rationality in these conditions implies that an end/means calculation is involved in the decision making process, where the actor will chose the option that maximize his benefits.

In the study of electoral system and their impact the fundamentals of the Rational Choice theory is applied to both the voters and electoral contestants. It is assumed that the electoral contestant aims to be re-elected, which is referred to as his reward. The constraint of the political contestant will be the institutional rules both formal and informal. On the voter's side the reward can either be ethnic or individual (Lindberg, 2010, p.3). However for this paper we will focus on the electoral contestant rather than the voter and generally assume that given the 'ethnicization' of the Mauritian electoral system ethnicity representation and individual rewards are overlapping.

Overview of the Mauritian Electoral System and its main features

Electoral systems come in a variety of forms. Figure 1 illustrates these varieties under three major categories and the main permutations they can take.

Figure 1: Electoral Families

The three main broad categories are the Plurality/Majority, the Proportional Representation and the Mixed System (a mixture of the Plurality/Majority and Proportional representation forms). For the purpose of this paper we will focus on the Mauritian type of electoral system, the Block Vote System which is from the family of the plurality/majority system.

The Majority feature of the Mauritian electoral system

The universal Adult Suffrage was introduced in Mauritius in 1959 and the Mauritian electoral system, the Block Vote System, is an adaptation of the British Plurality/Majority First Past the Post electoral inherited from the British colonial administration. Since its inception in 1885, the Electoral System was changed four times (Sithanen, 2011, P.7) to respond to the changes in the Mauritian social structures. The present Mauritian electoral system dates back to 1967, where a 70 member legislative assembly was established with 62 MPs directly elected and up to 8 nominated best losers.

The Republic of Mauritius is divided into 21 constituencies, where 3 candidates are elected in each constituency except for the island of Rodrigues, where 2 MPs are elected. Voters express their preferences for three candidates from a list comprising of members of political parties and independent candidates. The three candidates gaining the most votes are elected even if they did not

obtain an absolute majority. Currently Mauritius is the only African country which has adopted the Block Vote system (see figure 2).

Institutionalization of ethnic Representation in the Mauritian electoral system

Ethnic representation seems to be one of the most important functions attributed to the Mauritian electoral system at the time of its reform in 1967. The provisions made in the electoral framework to achieve this were three folds. At the legal level, the Representation of the People Act made it compulsory for candidates to declare their ethnic belonging.

The second provision lies in the delimitation of the 20 constituencies in the island of Mauritius. The Banwell commission designed the delimitation of the 20 constituencies to ensure broad ethnic representation by promoting geographic concentration of ethnic groups (Sithanen, 2012, P.35; Bunwaree, 2005, P.5). In this way the Mauritian electoral system allows for a fair chance of representation by allowing ethnic groups to be elected in constituencies where they are numerically stronger.

The third provision is the Best Losers system which is a form of Proportional Representation. At its inception the Best Loser System was established to ensure broad ethnic representation by compensating for the First Past the Post deficiencies (MATLOSA 2003, P.35). The Mauritian Best Loser system allows for a fairer ethnic representation in case the First Past the Post system resulted in underrepresentation of some ethnic groups.

Political Parties in Mauritius

While the First Past the Post system is known for creating two party system in homogenous societies it is not the case for heterogeneous societies like Mauritius. Mauritius has seen the growth of a multitude of political parties. The emergence of a multiple party system is a translation of the deep social cleavages present in societies (Basedau, 2007, P.170).

In the Mauritian context political parties seeking to get into power have to adopt an ethnic driven strategy. This ethnic driven strategy is shaped by the First Past the Post and the Best Loser system. In ethnically divided societies the FPTP is praised for encouraging political parties to be “broad churches” by encompassing many elements of society (Reynold, 2005, P.22). Therefore, only a few organised political parties are able to dominate the political competition by proposing candidates that captures as many different ethnic constituencies as possible. The Block Vote system has the tendency to strengthen ‘those parties which demonstrate most coherence and organisational ability’ (Reynold, 2005, P.24).

The Mauritian electoral landscape has been dominated by three main political parties for decades. These parties are the LP, MMM and the MSM. Each party is supported by particular ethnic groups, which results from the ethnopolitical construction of the Mauritian society since the movements for independence (Bunwaree, 2005, P.2). The Best Loser system has been accused of contributing to this ethnopolitical construction of the Mauritian society by reinforcing ethnic division (Mathur, 1999.P.69)

The Mauritian electoral system and governance

Even if it is reiterating a fact it is important to highlight that the Mauritian democratic model is based on representativeness where elections are held regularly and members of parliament are elected using a constituency based electoral system. The current electoral system has traditionally been praised for putting in place the requirements for strong and stable governments. However, the price of maintaining this government stability has been to turn a blind eye on the disproportional electoral outcomes. Talking about democracy in Mauritius, Abdalla Hamdok, director of IDEA’s Africa programme said “*The Mauritian democratic model is often cited as an example of success in the Southern Africa region: it is characterized by regular elections, a multiparty culture, a track record of political stability, the management of diversity and ethnicity and undisputed election results. But this ‘picture-perfect’ scenario may not reflect the manner in which democracy is delivered and represented*” (Hamdok, 22.02.2006).

The electoral system's determination of representativeness at the governance level.

Representativeness is a critical issue in Mauritius not only because it is a representative democracy but also because of the ethno political divisions in the society. The outcome of a majoritarian electoral system determines brutally the losers and the winners, those who will have the power to decide on the allocation of the resources of the country and the constituencies that will benefit from these resources. Cox puts this relationship as candidates wishing to get elected and voters wishing to gain the benefits of voting for winners (Mazzar page380). This relationship is fundamental in understanding and predicting how the rational political actor will behave once in power.

In an ethnically divided society like Mauritius where ethnicity was institutionalized, representativeness have implications for the two aspects of governance that will be discussed in this paper; government stability and government effectiveness. Elected representatives are rational actors and will work for their constituencies. Professor Hansraj Mathur, a Mauritian electoral expert, demonstrated in his book 'Parliament in Mauritius' that there was no correlation between the number of seats obtained in the legislative assembly by one party and the number of votes that the party actually obtained in Parliament.

In 1991 the MSM/MMM coalition won 57 seats out of 62 with 56.28% of the total votes while the opposition party secured only 3 seats from the 62 seats while obtaining 39.95%. The example of 1995 is an even more drastic case where with 66.22% the Labour/ MMM coalition obtained 60 of the 62 seats in the legislative assembly, which represents all the seats contested on the island of Mauritius. This particular feature can be attributed to the First Past the Post system inheritance however the Block Vote system adopted by Mauritius further exacerbates this feature because of the difference in the district magnitude (Reynold, 2004, P.24). The Mauritian electoral system has been giving strong majorities to winning parties/coalitions at the expense of the 'losers'. This has considerable implications for ethnic representation, which directly depends on the configuration of coalitions contesting and winning the elections.

Government Effectiveness

Despite the questionable effects of the disproportional electoral outcomes of the First Past the Post system on the fundamental role of an opposition in a democratic legislative assembly, it has been acknowledged by many scholars as allowing for strong and responsive governments (Reynolds et al. 2005; Lizzeri and Persico 2000; Norris, 1997, p.305). Governments elected under the First Past the post system allow for members of the government to command a strong majority in the Legislative Assembly and to enact laws as and when required for the functioning of the effective functioning of the government's policies. However this characteristic refers to homogenous societies such as England where the government elected is a one party system, which blocks the political translation of socio-cultural cleavages through political parties (Basedeau, 2007,P.170), and does not have to constantly negotiate with minority parties. In this sense the party in power is empowered to implement its manifesto during the full term of its office without engaging in political bargaining.

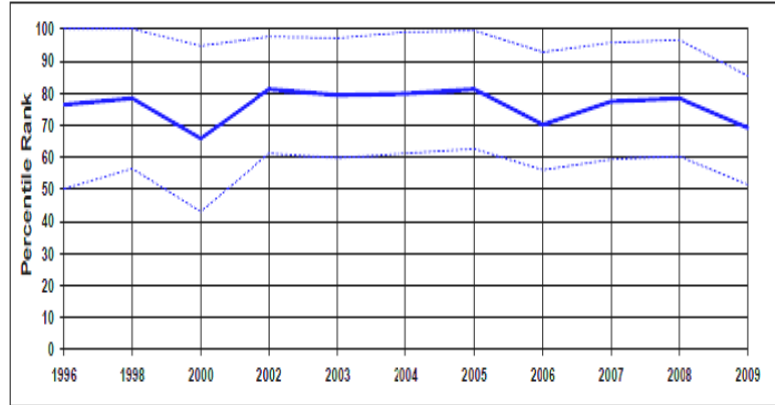
i) Strong and stable governments

Despite being a distributive institution in nature, where there are obvious losers and winners, the First Past the Post system encourages political parties to be 'broad churches' in ethnically divided societies (Reynold, 2004, P.22). Duverner, argued that since the FPTP system allows for only one candidate to be elected per constituency it induces candidates to go for a broad base of support. This has the effect of aggregating different interests in fewer political parties and often leads to a two party system where social cleavages are blocked.

The Mauritian experience of the First Past the Post had a different effect with the emergence of multiple parties translating the social cleavages. Given the heterogeneous feature of the society and the institutionalization of ethnicity representation, governance in Mauritius is embedded in constant bargaining. The main Mauritian political parties tend to be broad base in the sense that each party is not exclusively supported by one particular ethnic group. However since each party is supported by

particular ethnic groups there is a tendency to seek beyond political parties' internal diversity and to enter into coalitions to get into power. Since its (Mauritius) independence all governments are cross ethnic coalitions and governments are formed across party lines (Brautigam, 2009, P.11; Meisenhelder, 1997, P.282).

Using the World Bank Governance Indicator, which measures political stability by capturing perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism for



the years 1996 to 2010, we will look into the trends of political stability in Mauritius.

World Bank Governance Indicators: Government stability in Mauritius for the year 1996 to 2010

Figure 1 shows that indeed there has been some major trends towards political instability and violence around election times while producing satisfactory levels of stability most of the time.

Historically the Mauritian political system is said to have forged governing alliances mitigating ethnic, religious, and ideological cleavages through Parliamentary coalition building (Darga, 2004, P. 2-3). However other governance/electoral researchers talk about perceived government instability in Mauritius, which has been attributed to this ethno political system (Bunwaree and Kasenally, 2005). In the Mauritian case this instability has manifested itself in coalition splits but has not resulted provoked regime change (Darga, 2008, P.6). These trends can be explained from a rational choice theory perspective as the constant bargaining that government coalitions have to undergo. Indeed the different political parties and politicians, chosen to be part of the coalition for the specific ethnic support they bring to the coalition, will rationally tend to seek advantages for their constituencies.

The political stability that was witnessed in Mauritius during the period illustrated in figure 2 can be explained by the fact that with time both voters and candidates learn strategic coordination among ethnopolitical groups over a small number of winning candidates (Mozzafar, 2003, P.389). This helps to contain electoral volatility and the cost of forming multiethnic coalitions (Mozzafar, 2003, P.389). Indeed further examination of the electoral landscape and formation of coalitions in Mauritius shows that *'political parties tend to coalesce around ethnic identities and strong political families'* (Darga, 2004, P.2).

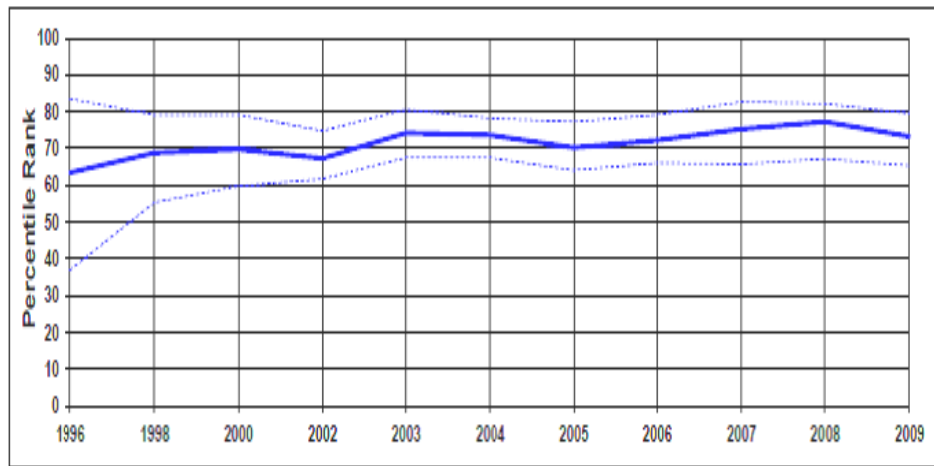


Figure 2

However the ‘ethnicization’ of the electoral system and representativeness at the governance level can be a dangerous game in a country where ethnic harmony is fragile. The sharpest drop in political stability in figure X coincides with an ethnic-based riots and communal violence, which happened in 1999. Despite a tendency for the major coalitions to rally a broad base of ethnic groups, multi-party systems do not translate all social cleavages but aggregate some while suppressing others (Basedau, 2007, P.170). Amenah Jahangeer-Chojoo demonstrated that the system of coalition and representativeness in Mauritius has been detrimental for one particular ethnic group in terms of representation in the 1980’s, which gave way to fundamentalism in Mauritian politics (Jahangeer-Chojoo, 2010). Sheila Bunwaree on the other talks about ‘resentment over the fact that they (a particular ethnic group) are heavily underrepresented in the public sector and that opportunities are not the same for everyone in a society which calls itself democratic’ (Bunwaree, 2002,P.8). These shortcomings of governance due to underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups in a highly ethnicised political system are likely to be ingredients which can affect political stability and the level of violence in the country. The perception by ethnic groups of not being represented implies that they do not feel that the benefits from government.

ii) Responsiveness

The Mauritian Electoral system induces political contestants to maintain a link with their constituencies because of the geographical nature of the Mauritian electoral competition and the electoral formula used. Political contestants have to be perceived as responding to their geographic(ethnic in the case of members of coalitions) constituencies to achieve their aim, which we assume is re-election (their incentive and reward). On the other hand the voters exchange their votes for individual or ethnic rewards. The First Past the Post system has as characteristic that members of parliament are representatives of a certain geographic area for which they are responsible. This ensures that the constituencies have people at the governance level who are responsive to their needs and can carry their demands at the highest level (Reynold& Sisks, 1999, p.67). MPs act as intermediaries between the public and bureaucracy (De Ville & al, 1996, P.56). If this link is broken the elected candidate can be sanctioned by the voters at the next election.

Previously we saw that the First Past the Post gave disproportional advantages to the winning parties and thus their constituencies. In cases where the losing coalition gets merely no seat in parliament it can be assumed that constituencies not represented in the government coalition are at a disadvantage. Scholars like Lijphart confirmed this tendency in *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, where it was established that plurality/majority governments did not necessarily meant better policy makers or decision makers. With constituencies so tied to the political actor in a multiethnic and divided population policy decisions and government activities can promote clientelism along ethnic lines . In addition symbolic representation of the opposition in parliament, where the opposition is not numerically strong enough, undermines its capacity of challenging such practices and represent the interest of their constituencies affects accountability.

Mauritian Governance researchers such as Bunwaree, Darga and Richards have highlighted this feature of the Mauritian ethno political system and its interference on government effectiveness.

'The independence of the public service has been undermined by political interference over the years and as top civil servants are engaged in various lobby groups, including ethnic based ones, and as officers interpret the famous British civil service of "loyalty to the government of the day" as subservience to the political masters of the day.' (Darga, 2008, P.37).

In a paper on ethnic coexistence and governance and referring to a previous study done by the Centre of Applied Social Research Richards describes the Mauritian situation as where subtle forms of discrimination based on ethnicity and gender remain in some areas such as in recruitment and promotion opportunities, particularly in the public sector.' (Richards, 2007.P.1).

A feel of the extent of this problem seem to be so deep rooted due to its institutionalization and as Richards suggest that 'Politics is a major factor in Mauritius, and many would argue that political interference permeates all levels of life. Many of the public appointments and some of the private ones, at all levels, are based on political backing. Because of this, some worry that functionaries in political parties will appoint people according to cronyism, and that they will tend to appoint those of their own ethnicity.' (Richards, 2007.P6)

***'quick and coherent decision-making can be impeded by coalition cabinets and governments of national unity which are split by factions'* (Reynold, 2004, P.29).**

Ethnic tensions and the management of diversity :

The case of Mauritius.

Oojeet Suntoo



INTRODUCTION

Mauritius is often described as a plural society. The country has, since independence in 1968 and a Republic in 1992, been promoted as an “island of success” both economically and in terms of social development and this has been reflected in the development of a strong movement to promote ‘Mauritianism’. It continues to function as a successful democracy, and although there are some tensions among different social groups, these are more likely to be solved through the democratic process by the State than through ethnic conflict as compared to some countries like Somalia, Sudan and Burma amongst others. There is an existed open dialogue by the

public on coexistence issues, especially through the diverse and highly accessible media. The creation of a universal cultural identity has always been a high priority for the State. Each and every year members of different ethnic groups celebrate proudly the Independence Day. The national flags are found floating everywhere and all the public and private institutions are decorated with the four-colour flag.

International organizations see governance in Mauritius as being fair, transparent and based on democratic principles. According to the Mo Ibrahim Index Mauritius has been ranked 1st in Africa on good governance for all the last three assessments done in 2000/2001, 2004/2005 and 2008/2009. The average rate economic growth has varied between 4 to 6 percent on an average during the last four decades which shows the sacrifice made by the population to make the country progress. Given the world economic problem, the estimated economic growth for the year 2012 is around 3%, which is still positive. However, there is the perception among the Mauritian population that the state should do more efforts to redistribute the fruits growth, development and progress more equitably and that transparency prevails so that no ethnic groups feels being neglected.

Ethnicity is so visible in Mauritius and all stakeholders of the state are aware of its importance. The perception of being ignored or discriminated against and feeling of dissatisfaction by any particular ethnic group often lead to ethnic tension which may degenerate if not addressed quickly. Consequently, good leadership at all levels becomes essential to manage the country and consolidate the nation building view a view to sustain growth and development. So it is high

time for all the stakeholders namely, the government, private sector, socio-cultural groups, media, political and religious leaders to have a commitment towards the management of the diverse ethnic groups.

The main aim of this paper is to provide an overview of ethnic tensions and conflicts in the multi-ethnic Mauritian society and to describe some measurement, policies and strategies that are undertaken by the state to respond to ethnic tensions and conflicts in the society. For the purpose of this paper, the methodology includes the use of secondary data for the sake of discussion and analysis.

Firstly, the paper will describe the different ethnic groups in Mauritius and which will be followed by a brief literature on ethnicity and causes of ethnic tension and ethnic conflict. Then the state policies dealing with the management of multi-ethnic Mauritian society would be discussed and in the last part, we shall deal with some important issues in relation to the management of diversity.

METHODOLOGY

For Haralambos and Holborn (2000), Methodology includes both research methods through which the data are collected and the more general philosophies upon which the collection and analysis of data are based. In this paper, use of secondary data has been mainly used for the sake of reflection, analysis and discussion. Although, the methodology used may have its limitations, yet it contributes to give a picture of the necessary and important information that account for the consolidation of nation building in a multi-ethnic society. More in-depth studies, using a combination of various methods, on the theme would give better conclusion.

Literature review and findings

An overview of the Mauritian society

Mauritius has successively been a Dutch (1670-1710), French (1715-1814) and British (1814-1968) colony. For many years, the island was a stopover for traders on the route to and from India and the Far East. In the middle of the 18th century, Mauritius was a French colony whereby the cultivation of sugarcane and timber was initiated, and ever since then the island became a busy destination for traders.

Mauritius remained a mono crop economy based on sugar until after independence in 1968, when in the early 1970s the export-oriented industrialisation process took off. The Export Processing Zone (EPZ) sector has concentrated mostly on textile and textile-related products which helped to reduce considerably the problem of unemployment which our country was facing and also to open the economy a bit further while benefiting from preferential access to the European Markets. Since then there has been a structural transformation of the economy. Consequently, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has played a major role to boost the economic growth, technology transfer and the creation of employment.

At the same time, the tourism sector projected itself as a serious economic factor by contributing enormously to foreign exchange earnings of the country, and by creating further employment. A range of investment incentives were provided to boost the development of the tourism sector in terms of fiscal incentives and financial support for hotel development and management services. Therefore, during the 1980s and 1990s, export-oriented growth strategy has been powered by three main economic sectors, namely sugar, textile products and tourism which were very beneficial to the Mauritian economy.

In the early 1990s the economy had quite reduced its dependence on agriculture and its base became more diversified. The services sector, more particularly financial services, focusing on banking and insurance, have been embarked as the area for further economic development. For the last fifteen years, with globalization, Mauritius has moved to the offshore sector, more precisely to the communication and information technology. Now, our country is an open economy where the government has encouraged more and more overseas investors to implant their businesses in Mauritius.

From a helicopter view, although Mauritius does not possess any natural resources, it can be seen that the economic development of Mauritius has paved the way for continuous and sustainable

development in the various economic fields starting from the sugar, EPZ, tourism, banking and finance, and the offshore business sectors.

Mauritius is a multi-ethnic society. The Mauritian population is about 1.2 million and is composed of four official ethnic groups. According to the 1972 census, the country has Hindus (52%), General Population (30%), Muslims (17%) and Chinese (3%). It is important to note that none of these groups has a homogeneous population.

We are all an immigrant or the descendant of an immigrant to this land. Both the Dutch and the French imported workers from most African countries and these workers were treated as slaves. The slaves had to work for a minimum wage and they were not able to live a decent life as they were exploited by the Bourgeoisies. In 1834, following the abolition of slavery by the British administration, indentured labourers was brought in Mauritius from India to work in the sugar-cane fields. Afterwards, Chinese people from the Hakka-speaking region of South China embarked in the country to do businesses. Therefore, from that period to date, it still exists the different ethnic divisions in the country. That is why we say that Mauritius is a multi-racial country. Since Independence, each ruling party has been able to manage and consolidate nation-building by sharing the National cake equitably to each and every ethnic group. This has promoted a sense of belonging to each group, thereby creating a strong culture of being a Mauritian, thus classifying Mauritius as a 'rainbow nation'.

In 2005, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported, 'Strong domestic institutions have contributed substantially to Mauritian success'. In contrast to many developing countries, Mauritius has, since independence, been an effective democracy through the concern institutions to promote participation rather than division among its ethnically diverse population. Indeed Mauritius is a model among the African countries to reap the benefits of diversity.

Ethnic tensions and conflicts in Mauritius.

Today, many African countries are facing greater challenges to maintain peace and stability. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa, including Sierra-Leone, Ivory Coast, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo are volatile societies in terms of security, stability, political institutions and poverty. These countries are still searching a proper solution to maintain peace and harmony. Without any formula, they are going through continuous armed ethnic conflict. This is partly due to ineffective conflict management.

Politicised ethnicity might be detrimental to national unity and socio-economic well-being. It is important to note that most of these ethnic conflicts in those African countries are rooted in colonialism. The divide-and-rule method is still used by the leaders to pit ethnicities against each other, thus keeping the people from rising up against them. There are the misdistributions of economic resources to certain ethnic groups, therefore pushing the marginalized groups using their ethnicity to mobilise for equality.

Hence, ethnic groups can be defined as a community of people who share cultural and linguistic characteristics including history, beliefs, customs, myth, and origin. Sometimes, conflicts over race, religion, language and identity are difficult to resolve, manage or consolidate within a colonial country.

According to Thomas Eriksen (1993), he uses the term to refer to the aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as culturally distinctive. For Ralph Premdas (1993) Ethnicity refers to the collective consciousness of ethnic group and also to the bases of affinity which means that a group has common language, religion, customs and traditions.

(i) 1968 Ethnic Violence

Few weeks before the celebration of Independence on 12 March 1968, a heavy tension had emerged between Creoles and the Muslims in the capital city of the Island. The roots of the tension as argued by A.R. Mannick (1979) went back to the election campaign of the previous year. However, according to various newspaper sources, the riot was supposed to be originated at the Venus Cinema of Bell Village, Port- Louis, when two groups of different communities were engaged in a fight, namely the Istamboul group consisting of Muslims and the Texas group of Creole adherents. It all started during the weekend of 20-21 January 1968. The violence was of high tension in the Capital where twenty-eight persons were reported murdered and many people were wounded. Rioters damaged and burned more than 400 houses. Such an ethnic violence had never happened before in Mauritius and this riot horrified all Mauritians.

The government had no choice than to impose a state of emergency – ‘Le couvre feu’ – preventing people to circulate after 17 hr 05. The suburbs of Port-Louis like Cite Martial, Trinquebar, Plaine Verte and Roche Bois were all gathered by violence and rumours. The violence started to calm down by the end of January 1968, due to British troops and the energetic intervention of the political leaders. (Sources: l’express newspaper of 21 January 1968 to 31 January 1968).

After that phenomenon, leaders of the main ethnic groups decided to take appropriate actions to cooperate and work in peace and harmony with the overall aim of developing a unified and integrated society. A year later, in 1969, the then ruling Labour government made a coalition with the opposition Party, Parti Mauricien Sociale Democrat (PMSD), which helped to reduce ethnic tension in the country. After that period, it was found that a peaceful coexistence among the Mauritian people reigned until the early 1990’s. Many people from the lower class believed that the economic development achieved by the country was benefitting only a few and causing them to live in a very poor socio-economic condition. Gradually, the problem of ‘malaise creole’ cropped up where the Creole people showed their anger vis-à-vis the State, but nobody seriously did anything to help them to come out of their deprived positions. People from other communities also were found in a marginalised economic situation. The social problems affecting the country started to aggravate slowly, finally exploding in a serious violence in early 1999.

(ii) Riots 1999

During the month of February 1999, there was a severe violence in the country. The Creoles had mobilized to show their frustration to the authorities, due to the death of the famous reggae singer Kaya who was found dead in his cell. Therefore, the Creoles used that tragedy as a reference of poverty and they had destroyed the country’s main institutions and buildings of the wealthiest people, as the majority of them are supposed to be the most marginalized group in the country.

The term Malaise Creole has been introduced to explain the deplorable conditions of some sections of the Creole community and this can be seen as a major cause of the social explosion.

This tragedy started on 19 February 1999 where the Movement Republicain (MR) had organized a free concert for the decriminalization of “gandia” (cannabis) in Rose-Hill. After two days, the police questioned some people identified as having smoked or induced to smoke gandia during that event. Kaya, the famous reggae man was among them and he admitted having smoked. Immediately, he was arrested and imprisoned in Alcatraz (detention centre for big drug dealer and criminal). On 21 February 1999, Kaya was found dead in his cell. It was of the opinion that Kaya had been beaten to death by the police officers.

The riots by the Creoles during that period were of extreme violence. They have damaged the government property such as police stations and vehicles. These rioters were out of control as they put fire to sugar cane fields and a lot of both public and private assets in various parts of the country.

They also seized the opportunity to loot supermarkets and shops. Mauritius was handicapped for nearly two weeks. We could also see that another community was very tensed due to act of vandalism from the Creole community. Both the Hindu and Muslim communities were against that barbaric gesture. So they organized troops to fight with the Creole people.

According to the conclusion of some people, they believe that the riots were an indication of the anger and frustration of the marginalized section of this country and that Kaya's death was simply a detonator.

The Malaise Creole in Mauritius needs to be worked more profoundly by the State; otherwise ethnic tensions may explode again, which is very costly for the country and for the sake of Mauritius in the International arena. Schiff (1998) stated that *"Efficiency may depend on the distribution of income because a more unequal distribution increases friction among social groups, reduces their willingness to cooperate and may result in political instability. This is particularly true of countries characterised by ethnic diversity where each ethnic group is endowed with different factors of production."*

(iii) Damaging Tent and Face book issues.

In the month of February 2012, more precisely during the Maha Shivratri festival, Mauritians of the Hindu faith pay homage to Lord Shiva. Many people of the Hindu community leave their dwellings for a procession to Grand-Bassin (sacred lake) where the devotees poured the sacred water onto Lord Shiva, after prayers are said. This occasion is very meaningful to the Hindu people. Many people from different Hindu associations or volunteers serve some refreshments and sweet cakes to the pilgrims going towards or returning from the sacred lake. They build large tents to welcome those pilgrims where the latter can relax for a while.

During the night, some people of another ethnic group have damaged the tent of the Hindu community in the surroundings of Vacoas. More surprisingly, two police officers (non-Hindu) from Vacoas Police Station were also incorporated in the affair. This has tremendously disturbed the country mainly the Hindu community. They were very angry in that period of sacrifice. If some political and religious leaders, together with the authority concerned would not calm down the situation, this could degenerate into an ethnic tension between the two communities.

By the end of July to the early August 2012, there was a capital issue for several days on the media concerning the misuse of Facebook. A young surfer of 22 years had posted racist comments on the Facebook against another community who was fasting during that period. Another user also supported the comments. This has enormously affected the community concerned during that period of sacrifice and this could crop up into ethnic tensions if some religious and political leaders have not reacted on time.

Therefore, from the above, it is clear that tensions still exist in our multi-ethnic society.

If the State does not manage carefully, this cold tension might be degenerated into high tension, hence conflicts.

Nation building and Good Governance

Nation-building is the intervention in the affairs of a nation state for the purpose of changing the state's method of government. It includes efforts to promote institutions which will provide economic well being and social equity within the people of a particular society.

Government is one among the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance may include NGOs, religious leaders, political parties and the private sector. All stakeholders other than the government are grouped together as part of the "civil society."

Governance is the process of decision-making and by which these decisions are implemented. Governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making for the benefit and progress of the country.

Good governance has normally 8 major characteristics, namely *participatory, consensus oriented, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effective and efficient, equitability and inclusivity and the rule of law*. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into consideration and that the voices of the most vulnerable people in society are heard before decisions are taken.

There are several social actors namely the government, private sector, religious leaders and NGOs which contribute enormously to the society for the well-being of the needy people. These different partners work together as a team to promote sustainable development in our plural society. In terms of cultural values and entertainment, the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure often organize series of free activities such as folk dances, songs, entertainment, games and educational quiz amongst others, in order to fulfill the needs of the population, mainly for the most vulnerable groups. Therefore these groups feel that they form parts of the society where great consideration is given to them.

Some measures undertaken to manage multi-ethnic Mauritius

(i) The Best Loser System (BLS)

The Best Loser System is a method used in Mauritius to make sure that the minorities ethnic groups are well and equitably represented in the parliament. The House consists of 70 members of whom 62 are directly elected in their respective 21 constituencies; 3 in each constitution in Mauritius and 2 in Rodrigues. According to our Constitution (Section 5 of the First Schedule), the Electoral Supervisory Commission may nominate up to 8 additional members who have not directly elected during the suffrage. This is to have a balance in community representation in Parliament. Thus, this method acts as a factor for social cohesion for our multi-ethnic and fragile society where it ensures that each community has its representative in the House.

Several types of proportional-representation (PR) systems have been proposed to both the Ruling and Opposition Parties to replace the Best Loser System but none have applied yet. For example, in 2002, the Sachs Commission, set up by the Government and chaired by the South African judge Albie Sachs, recommended retaining the electoral system in Mauritius, with some minor changes. Again in 2011, Professor Guy Carcassonne submitted his recommendations to the Government. But till now, no electoral reform has taken place. Therefore it is clear that Mauritians like their traditional mode of electoral systems modeled after the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, where members of the Parliament are voted in at regular General Elections, on the basis of a first past the post system.

(ii) Cultural Centres and Religious subsidies

To promulgate cultures of different ethnic groups, the Ministry of Arts and Culture of the Republic of Mauritius has come up with certain institutions that are thought to both foster unity among the population. Several cultural centres are found in Mauritius. The idea behind this is to preserve the cultural values of the different ethnic groups. We have the African Cultural Centre, basically for the Creole community, the Islamic Cultural Centre for the Muslim community, the Tamil Cultural Centre, Telegu Cultural Centre, Marathi Cultural Centre for the Hindu population and the Chinese Cultural Centre for the Chinese population. We also have the Mauritian Cultural Centre, which has as its main aim the promotion of the Mauritian culture. On the other hand, to preserve the languages of the different ethnic groups, the Government has initiated different Speaking Unions to each community. For instance, we have recently witnessed the coming up of the Creole and Bhojpuri Speaking Unions in addition to the already existing Speaking Unions for Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and Mandarin. These Speaking Unions would help the preservation of the different cultural languages to maintain a sense of belonging and social cohesion among the members of the various groups and these can contribute towards national unity.

On the other hand, religious subsidies are distributed to each religious institution. Each year, in the Budget, the Government votes a sum of money as subsidies and this is shared to all religious groups depending upon the number of adherents they have. It is distributed so that the different religions could perform their religious activities and face the administration cost. According to several debates through the media, it is believed that the funds are not properly utilized by some groups. Given that the public constantly questions the management of the religious funds, the actors concerned have the duty to show more transparency because it is the money of the public which has been allocated to them. It has been taken into consideration that some religious institutions make effective use of the funds to combat some social problems. Nevertheless, government funds these cultural centers for the latter to promote and celebrates their own values and cultures and for the development of the country while contributing to the Mauritian heritage.

(iii) Free Education, Free Health care and Free Transport

Although Mauritius does not possess any natural resources, Education and Health care are free since the 1970s when Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (SSR), also known as the Father of the Nation, brought a comprehensive welfare state in Mauritius. His aim was to guarantee equal opportunities to all citizens regardless of race, religion, or class and to secure a healthy and clean environment for future generations. His concept of welfare state such as free education and free healthcare was made for the most vulnerable people in the country. Mauritius, being a net importer of food, has traditionally subsidized the staple food (riz ration) in order to mitigate the vulnerability of the working class. SSR initiated free secondary education as from January 1977. His vision of welfare state was motivated by putting the people first, starting with the most needy. Without neglecting his effort to further improving in English and French, SSR took major steps in introducing the teaching of oriental languages in the government schools and colleges. SSR had the idea to have a united nation through the cultural diversity. Since 2005, the son of SSR, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, has come up with free transport to all students and old age citizens travelling by bus. Despite the financial crisis in Europe, which has an impact on our economy in terms of currency (EUR), the government has not cut cost to the welfare of the population. The idea behind this is to maintain social stability in Mauritius, whereby the marginalized people (mainly the Creoles), could benefit from the welfare State. According to some commentators, these could bring harmony and peace in the country.

(iv) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Apart from the government, NGOs and religious leaders, the private sector also has guaranteed the poor people that they will continue to help the country in terms of social and sustainable development. Some large companies have initiated a social policy programme for the vulnerable members of the society and now they have their own Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes.

In 2009, the Government of Mauritius *established a policy with the overall objective of mandating registered companies to pay 2% of their book profit towards programmes that contribute to the social and environmental development of the country.* But as from January 2012, *every profitable company is required annually to set up a CSR Fund equivalent to 2% of its profits chargeable to income, derived during the preceding year.* All profitable companies have to use their CSR fund on programmes or projects that are approved by the Government authority that is National Empowerment Fund. Longago, the main aim of any private sector business was to make profit. However, nowadays, it has been noticed that there has been a metamorphosis of the roles played by the business community in the Mauritian society. The private sector plays important more social roles in addition to its traditional economic roles with a view to contribute to the welfare of the population from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Even the Civil society, mainly the Non Governmental Organisations collaborate largely with the private to develop programmes and projects to combat poverty and others social ills in the country.

These companies have to contribute 2% of their profit to a fund and this will be utilised for social development of the country. This has become mandatory during the 2009 Budget.

In Addition to CSR, some scholars have introduced the concept of Individual Social Responsibility (ISR). This is where some wealthiest patron helps the marginalized population of the country.

(v) The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is the national public broadcasting service (Radio and TV) of the Republic of Mauritius and its outer islands including Rodrigues and Agalega. It was established as a body corporate on 8 June 1964 under the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Ordinance no. 7 (1964). Prior to that date it operated as a Government Service under the name of Mauritius Broadcasting Service. Radio and TV programmes cover a wide range of subjects and are broadcast in different languages including French, English, Hindustani, Creole, Chinese and a host of other Indian languages.

Despite a lot of critics, the MBC has been able to satisfy each ethnic group through its various programmes (24/7) through films, folk songs, dances, cultures, educational activities and amongst others.

It has been argued that, through the MBC, a sense of recognition and awareness has been promulgated in the country where each ethnic group has respect to each other. This has help consolidate the nation building.

(vi) The Equal Opportunity Act

The object of the Equal Opportunity Act is to ensure that every person has an equal opportunity to attain his objectives in various spheres of activities and that no person is placed, or finds himself, at a disadvantage, by reason of his status, namely, his age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation. Therefore, the different ethnic groups will have an equal opportunity in the affairs of the country. The implementation of the act is thought to result in bringing equality and equity in the multi-ethnic society.

CONCLUSION

The paper has given an account of the ethnic tensions and conflicts in Mauritius. There has also been a description of the some of the measure undertaken to manage the multi-ethnic society. It has been found that the Mauritian state has always laid emphasis on nation building in terms of good governance. Although much effort has been done by the major state stakeholders to sustain social stability, yet the management of the diversity needs further improvement and therefore transparency in all the activities and actions become more than important for the consolidation of the Mauritian nation. Good governance should be prevailed at all levels with a view of improving social justice in the country where everybody will be recognized according to merits and achievement.

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Comparative analysis of first female leaders' rise to power in the developing and developed worlds

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ABSTRACT



A 21st century truism from the political executive world would be those few female leaders rising to power through democratic elections, and leading cabinets or councils as prime ministers and presidents. Researchers in gender politics concede to the need for more academic work probing into the reasons motivating past and recent women breaking through the political glass ceiling. Comparative studies on female leaders in Third World versus advanced nations are rare.

Pioneering research concentrated on the all-exclusive male American presidency. Whilst some female leaders in the developing world have previously benefitted from the sister-wife-daughter nexus, the phenomenon in Africa has been prominent, particularly in post-conflict societies. Women have a self-perception of being the epitome of stability because “all men failed”. Furthermore, consequential portfolios such as finance, education and even policing, are handed to highly educated and experienced women.

Elections in transitional democracies, although fragile saw women gaining the confidence of voters. Age, experience and the extent of power yielded- depending on the type of executive-are some determining factors. Party leadership and affiliation, in general, constitute leverage for experienced female politicians.

Three hypotheses were developed: first, the relatively easier accession to power for women in developing countries; second, the existence of a glass ceiling; and third, gender stereotyping. Findings of the study include: pre-electoral conditions, could be important factors to winning elections; the existence of a glass ceiling, but temporally cracked; and varied degrees of gender stereotyping in developed European countries for instance.

Author's keywords: *first female prime minister/ head of state, glass ceiling, gender stereotyping, transitional democracies, Africa.*

INTRODUCTION

Although the United States of America was the first country ever to grant women access to the political arena, no female president has entered the White House to this day. In contrast, Sri Lanka, amid political instability and underdeveloped economy, saw Sirimavo Bandaranaike grab power as the world's first female prime minister after the death of her incumbent husband in 1961. Building a political family dynasty until her death in 2000, she opened the path for her daughter, Chandrika Kumaratunga, to become the first female executive president. The spiraling trend was observed in 1980, when a string of women have won democratic elections, particularly in Europe and Latin America, and this gives rise to a thesis based on their path to power- one that lead to shattering the glass ceiling in executive politics.

In 2012, the ratio of serving women in developing versus developed world was 1: 1.3 (39 v. 30 respectively)¹⁰⁶. Nevertheless, legitimacy for power ought to be taken into consideration for authentic gender politics research. Female leaders being democratically elected, those standing out of the wife-daughter-sister nexus, are our focus in this paper. The mode of election avers crucial to strengthen their importance in gauging the extent of political success: yielding votes through direct ballot countrywide has been the characteristic of women elected since 2005.

Our problem lies in the following observations:

- Both infant and advanced democracies have elected first female leaders at short intervals; for example, Germany and Liberia in 2005¹⁰⁷
- Of those women, only a few obtain power through democratic elections;
- In Africa, the phenomenon of women breaking the political glass ceiling is prominent in post-conflict societies; more complex in Europe, and continual in Latin American countries.

A comparative examination focusing on the differences between Third World countries and their advanced counterparts may lead to understand the mechanism behind choosing a woman over a man to rule for a fixed term in political office. However, the income and democratic maturity gaps are important watermarks throughout the study. This thesis is, above all, a study of women 'firsts' with an aim to decipher possible factors and catalyst propelled them to power.

A fundamental thought in this context, would be not all women at present neither marked history as firsts nor were elected on a majority basis as sole winning party.¹⁰⁸ For instance, Australia's Julia Gillard fought a leadership challenge within the Labour party, after which the Prime Minister was ousted. Also, some political systems accommodate a ceremonial figurehead when referring to the 'head of state'.

Elsewhere, say Brazil and Liberia, both head of state and government is fused in a single person, thus leading to full power endowment. Angela Merkel- oft-most powerful chancellor- is a rarefied case: despite being holding executive power, a collegial vote has the last word: thus she is indirectly elected. Focus on the particular circumstances having contributed to the success of a first woman executive is crucial to understand the genesis and the process.

An overview of methodology used

Comparative gender research has deep resonance because not all regions are created equal¹⁰⁹, yet political, historical and gender-related similarities can be drawn. Under the African umbrella, it is to be noted that Liberia is the sole nation with a female President- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf- ruling over two consecutive mandates and currently the only head of state in Africa. The Latin American continent, reputed for its feminist approach, sourced from Peronista times¹¹⁰, presently counts Brazil, Argentina and Costa Rica among women-ruled presidencies. Its equivalent Nordic countries are the notably modern feminist cradle, for simultaneously having women occupy the Prime Minister's office and a considerable chunk of parliamentary seats.

¹⁰⁶ Author updated the tabulation provided by Jalalzai F. (2008) *Women Rule: Shattering the Executive Glass Ceiling*, Uni. Of Missouri-Saint Louis, USA: Politics and Gender, pp. 215

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix I

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix II

¹⁰⁹ Paxton P. M. and Hughes M. (2007) *All Regions are not Created Equal*, in (ed.) *Women, Politics and Power A Global Perspective*, USA: Pine Forge Press, Sage Publications Company, 217-256

¹¹⁰ Referring to the period during which Eva de Peron ruled Argentina following the death of her husband; she quickly became known as the mother of the people, spearheading an ideological party and advocating social programs

Therefore, the main question would be how did women in Africa enter the political arena massively, and how other women made it to the top. Some hypotheses are drawn to this respect:

- The glass ceiling and its existence
- Gender stereotyping
- Party affiliation

Glass ceiling could be an obstacle within a party, as much as it can be generalized. If just thirteen women hold executive power and chair the Cabinet, the implication is quite clear: obstacles are palpable, but to varying degrees depending on the social evolution and gender equality status of the country. Yet, it would be an equally true statement that 79 women have marked history since 1960: yielding full powers or not, the significance of their accession to State duties cannot be underestimated.

Radical feminists would agree that such phenomenon is portent of a leap in dissolving gender stereotypes. Politics is no more a fellocratic world; women's rights- contesting elections and voting- are just primal. To hold power as the only avenue leading to change and influence, is better than remaining in the backbench, although the latter constitutes a stepping stone for female politicians.

This workshop paper analyses numerous factors, seeks to cover most issues pertaining to the topic, and opens room for debate on whether there is a recipe for a woman to fight barriers- personal and public- and obtain power. As for African women, the glass ceiling up to the political office is still present, which channels our thoughts on whether leadership, and other easels such as support (financial, political, grassroots, media) are essential in post-conflict societies.

Contextualizing for Mauritius is also important: can women succeed? Will we ever have a female prime minister? We have to acknowledge a priori conditions, such as the construction of our electoral and political systems, and discussing the relevance of the forthcoming gender quotas for local government seats.

FINDINGS

1. 'Being' a woman in politics

When it comes to women, 'glass ceiling' is the lighthouse of the debate. Having its roots in corporate leadership, the term penetrated politics to refer to the quasi-absence of women representatives in the legislature, even less at the top. The private-public divide originates from the Latin American experience (Craske 1999: 202-204) and can be credited as the ancestor of the glass ceiling for it symbolizes the shift from home to the public arena.

Within the term lies a paradox: while referring to women striving rapidly towards ultimate management in the political office, it also highlights the predominance of factors reliant on gender stereotyping: societal and cultural barriers, contextual party dominance, self-confidence, personal image and experience. Jalalzai (2008) asserts that gender equality alone will not help break through the glass ceiling, strongly implying that it is misleading to think of gender as its root cause. In the same vein, Murray (2010: 22) claims that the barrier is likely to remain stagnant without enabling factors. Those factors range from pressure from non-governmental organizations, the urgency to correct post-conflict drudgery in African terms, and party affiliation in advanced democracies.

a. Gender stereotyping

Men and women are differentiated by means of gender roles, identity, and image. On one hand, the World Bank's World Development Report 2012 defines gender as "the social, behavioural, and

cultural attributes, expectations and norms associated with either sex”¹¹¹. It is to be noted that gender stereotypes are measured in voters’ opinions of which share s allocated to the female segment of the population, men’s choice of candidates (expectations), the overall valuation of experience, competence, attractiveness on personal (marital status, professional career, life experiences) and party (political path, ideology, innovation) levels, ethnicity (social, behavioural, cultural). A complex issue arises when considering whether people, especially women, ought to vote for another woman out of solidarity, or for her political persona. Underlying this problem is the logic that gender equality also implies that both sexes are viewed as mere political candidates; women being equal citizens to contribute to decision-making. On the other hand, stereotypes ‘are pervasive binary traits which are identified as typical of either gender’. Women are thought to be more compassionate, gentle, motherly’, and supportive of welfare rather than war (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, Delli Carpinia and Fuchs 1993, Kaufmana and Petrocik 1999 op. cit Murray 2010: 227) than the harsher and conservative image of male politicians. Additionally, on a normative note, female politicians are more likely to attract nicknames¹¹² than men as those are noticeable for dictators or politicians who are media darlings. Helle Thorning-Schmidt is tagged ‘Gucci Helle’; Rousseff of Brazil ‘mother of the growth acceleration programme’; Slovak’s Iveta Radicova ‘Tigress of the Tatras’. Gender traits appear starker when competing against male candidates in an electoral race; when two women compete against each other¹¹³, then purely political elements- such as party support- come to play.

Similar to the glass ceiling, stereotypes relating to female politicians can be positive too. The African woman ‘holds up half the sky’, taking in charge the leadership of the household. In actual fact, the death of warriors in Rwanda left a gender vacuum which is then filled by women. This is intricately linked to political actions, as far as reconstruction of the society in post-conflict countries is concerned. Here the public-private divide, a quite sensitive issue in developed countries, fades considerably.

Thompson et al (1997:72) argue that although voter stereotypes do not always work against female candidates; they are seen as a significant factor in electoral politics in general and in the voters’ decision-making process in particular¹¹⁴. Nonetheless, 6 out of 10 cases¹¹⁵ in the period 2005-2011 show that female leaders obtained power through coalitions, simply because they expected not to, or did not wield majority votes; as it happened in Brazil’s last elections, where a run-off was necessary. Liberia’s election of ‘Old Ma’ is an exception to the rule, as she collected almost 90% of votes when she ran for a second term. But, initially in 2005 she had lost the first round¹¹⁶.

Where stereotyping and politics meet most evidently is the allocation of portfolios to female ministers. Although some examples in Africa demonstrate that the scope is not very limited for competent professionals, there is a perception that ministries for child welfare, social security, youth, women and so forth are almost naturally attributed to women only. The majority (98) of portfolios for women are repeatedly social affairs¹¹⁷. The fact is not to be taken for granted: women are usually

¹¹¹ World Development Report 2012, pp. 4

¹¹² See Appendix III: Personal sphere of female leaders

¹¹³ Think of Dilma Rousseff as an example: in the second round had to beat Green candidate Marina Silva who had triggered the run-off. But when competing against men, female candidates had to get rid of the stereotypes and sternly convince voters, thus seeking to compete on a leveled playing field.

¹¹⁴ Wuddy and Terkildsen (1993) cited in Jalalzai F. (2006) *Women Candidates and the Media: 1992-2000 elections*

¹¹⁵ Appendix II: Table showing *political aspects* of women leaders elected in the period 2005-2011

¹¹⁶ Johnson-Sirleaf’s opponent was world-famous football player George Weah, her major opponent in the key 2005 elections. As Weah came as a predominantly inspirational figure, Sirleaf channeled her efforts in cruising aloof villages, and playing on the image that Liberia was a ‘baby’ (see *The Child Who Will Be Great*, autobiography) who needed an experienced ‘mother’ to take care of the people.

¹¹⁷ Refer to the UN Women map 2012. A total of 1065 portfolios in 188 countries have been identified. Only 40 are dedicated to foreign affairs, 39 for justice, and 25 for finance/budget.

better placed¹¹⁸ to work on policies that are likely to affect them, and the society at large. In the context of post-conflict countries, women ministers in charge of society and reconstruction is both plausible and desirable. But for relatively advanced democracies, women stuck at this stage indicate a pervasiveness of gender stereotyping.

Mauritian gender issues fall in middle of the spectrum because women are well educated¹¹⁹, conscious of their civic rights, and are on a quite fair footing with men on the scientific, employment and business leadership levels. But when it comes to political empowerment, we rank 86th worldwide with a score of 0.0992¹²⁰. A monitoring authority- the Equal Opportunities Commission- ensures gender discrimination is punished by law as laid out in the eponymous Act 2008. Women in Mauritius have switched from traditional gender roles to relatively modern ones.

When it comes to politics, it would not be justified to say that the arena is completely closed. The entry to the National Assembly was not denied after independence but truth is that gender roles at the time were still embedded in traditionalism. If we cite for example the post of President of the Republic, no woman was ever proposed to assume the responsibility- one that is primarily about ceremonial rubber-stamp and being the state's ambassador abroad. Today, thinking about that possibility opens on the reasoning that nothing really closed doors. Politics were not only highly gendered, but also more concentrated on maintaining stability in the Mauritian society. Gender stereotypes served as catalyst to reinforcing the glass ceiling: no woman sat in the Speaker's seat or at the State House, even less as deputy prime minister¹²¹.

b. Quota: blessing, necessary evil or lure?

In the seventies, advanced democracies such as Denmark, Sweden and Norway had adopted voluntary gender quotas¹²². Consequently a high number of female representatives entered parliament. The beneficial effects of prolonged quota rule are visible today: the Nordic region is unique in terms of feminist achievement in the political domain. At present, of countries with a female executive (12), three have legislated quota; the rest (9) are voluntary. In Africa, emphasis is placed on the voluntary aspect, not to force women into politics, but to empower them to drive the change they wish to see. We can admit that without quotas, the entry to politics in less democratic societies would have otherwise remained tightly sealed. Zimbabwe is one such example.

Not only do quotas portray commitment to, or at least a semblance of gender equality, but also encourage the practice of using women for political ends by catch-all parties. Even though Rwanda is hailed as the champion of gender equality, the reality sheds some doubts. Its constitution stipulates that 24 of 27 seats are reserved for women elected by collegial vote. In 2008, a milestone for the country, women won 56.25% of parliamentary seats, most were from President Kagame's party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front.

¹¹⁸ This does not mean, however that men are incompetent in the field, nor that the approach is prejudicial to women.

¹¹⁹ Educational Attainment score (2011): .09888 for Mauritius (scale 0-1) in the Global Gender Gap Report 2011

¹²⁰ Global Gender Gap Report 2011

¹²¹ According to the United Nations 'Women in Politics' map 2012, 41 of 273 presiding officer posts are occupied by women in the world, compared to 230 men. Antigua and Barbuda has two female speakers in its legislature. Rwanda, India, Iceland, Pakistan and Zimbabwe are also part of the list.

¹²² Global Gender Gap Report (2011) pp. 22

Two observations can be made: except for Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland and Costa Rica, an elected head of government is not totally proportional or representative of gender equality. Basically the reasoning is that an all-female parliament does not guarantee a female executive or vice-versa. Indeed, Third World countries could not ensure propelling more female leaders. Whist the latter stood for elections, few women actually won parliamentary seats. Inter-Parliamentary Union's statistics (2012) figures for women in parliament indicate that Brazil (a surprising **8%**), Trinidad and Tobago (28.6%), Australia (24.7%/ 38.2%), Guinea-Bissau (10%), Liberia (9.6%/ 13.3%), Thailand (15.8%/ 15.4%) have **low** representation in legislatures. Conversely, Nicaragua (40.2%) and South Africa (**42.3%**) surpass the most feminist country in the world (Iceland) yet **never** had a female leader.

Are quotas really essential? Opponents to the idea claim that quotas prioritize quantity over quality and the former will not bring any clear advancement in developed countries. Moreover, say whichever target has been set as per the country's quorum, how will those women constitute a significant leverage over voting Bills if not by majority? The main objective behind quota appears to be purely motivated by the need for female inclusiveness, not so much to nurture a political career in the long run. Also, it leads to political parties to woo potential women heavyweight prior to join the arena, thus posing a threat to fairness of representation in the legislature.

Finally, quotas are the double-edged tool for politicians. Unless meant to encourage women's participation in politics to destroy the second-sex status and enable progress 'when all men failed', this artificial method could be used against its purpose, thus violating fundamental democratic principles. Also, as demonstrated earlier, no correlation exists between the number of women seated in parliament and female leaders.

c. Personal aspects: Who am I?

It is a fact that female leaders in the developing world are as educated and experienced as their European or American counterparts¹²³. Thus, education could be another determining factor to explain their rise to political office. It also means that a history of opening avenues for women in politics has paved the way to a female leader in the long-run, first because stereotypes fade, and second, women themselves are less reluctant, by virtue of their competencies, to run for President or Prime Minister (Jalalzai & Krook 2009: 9). As age is often associated with experience, on average female political leaders are 57 years old and have been elected in mostly parliamentary systems¹²⁴.

A common feature to all female leaders in the period 2005-2012 is high competency, and two decades of political life on average. Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf of Liberia ran for president three times before 2005, and had been involved as finance minister in previous tough male governments, apart from her professional experience at the top of financial African institutions. Voters and detractors had knowledge of her career, which eliminated the need to carve a place in the political arena.

Transitional phases in developing countries activate the flexibility to change the highly gendered state into one of stability, and that means involving women. And it is not, in the end, so much of a surprise.

A research by Anderson *et al* (2011: 2509) found that African female political leaders are presented in a negative way by the international media, calling into question the credibility of these women as leaders of their nations.

Nevertheless, all women leaders have important features in common: political experience, age, education, quasi-inexistent family commitments (dynasties excluded here). Multiple implications can be drawn: a combination or predominance of the factors constitute an indigenous cocktail to a country. Merkel is one example: mannered as a male politician, she had been accused of

¹²³ Global Gender Gap Report (GGR) 2011

¹²⁴ Refer to Appendix II: Political aspects

insensitiveness¹²⁵ because she was being viewed as a woman, and through her infamous¹²⁶ political history. Comparatively, in Latin America, gender becomes the source of power and credibility. Researcher Elsa Chaney (1979) coined the ‘supermadre’ theory¹²⁷ which seeks to explain the endearment of female political figures by voters. Thus, the candidate is viewed as a mother to the nation, to the extent of internalizing every maternal feature which will help re build a country. Brazil’s Dilma Rousseff image was a strong welding of endorsement by predecessor Lula Da Silva, her own struggle to freedom, and her commitment to the Workers’ Party.

Directing cabinet decisions and policy making does not exclude inherent threats associated with the highest political role. Corruption, negative public perception, political choices, leadership style and influence abuses did not spare female leaders. We have seen that the family nexus is salient in Southeast Asia, but powerful women underwent serious corruption and nepotism accusations¹²⁸. Being a woman therefore is not completely synonymous with the ‘politically correct’. It is not so much being a woman than a politician. However the media’s subtle role decides the course of her career in such cases.

2. Predominance of political aspects

On the outset, predominant political factors such as the type of government and electoral systems which vary from regions appear to determine the entry to the highest political office (Paxton 2007: 223-224). Women subject to direct popular vote indicate high confidence and consolidated party support. This is most likely to occur in presidential systems. Murray (2010: 239) believes that this system creates increased attention around the women candidates, giving rise to the issue of likeability meaning that extreme traits inevitably lead to negative stereotyping.

Party affiliation and support is essential for the success of a female executive because unless she is known for being the wife/daughter/sister, without a democratic endorsement from a party, it is very difficult to forge her candidacy. Very rarely do women stand as independent candidates and succeed. Voters are not new to elections and visibility of parties; militants therefore look out for their candidates, and comprise of a valuable pool of ballots.

Putting a woman to rule becomes a risky move unless a previously installed culture facilitates acceptance of voters, and encourage them to choose her over a man. In that sense, it would be in the interest of the party, and not the candidate. The formula works perfectly particularly in Latin America and would be complex in other societies. Iceland for example, has an ultra liberal feminist culture, and it is perfectly acceptable that the prime minister is a woman.

According to Jalalzai (2008: 227-228), women are more prone to win elections under two circumstances: parliamentary system (also due to the fact that very rarely does a female President in a developing country gets elected) and when powers are relatively few and generally constrained’. Though it can be a general hypothesis, there are exceptions to the rule. Her arguments stem from the quantitative observation of political systems in the Third World, but do not provide a comprehensive analysis on African women. The only African woman has been elected as full executive president.

¹²⁵ Neukirch R., Steingart G. and Aust S. (2005) *Interview with Chancellor-in-waiting Angela Merkel*, Translated from German by Gareth Davies, Spiegel.

¹²⁶ Merkel had been viewed negatively when she denounced her political mentor and guru, Helmut Kohl in 1998, and took the reins of the Christian Democratic Union

¹²⁷ Chaney E. (1979) *Supermadre Women in politics in Latin America*, Institute of Latin American Studies.

¹²⁸ Yulia Tymoshenko was formally accused of corruption and bribe in 2011 during her mandate as Ukraine’s Prime Minister. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has been accused of appointing her sons to the top government posts, and recently suspended one of them on corruption charges too. Benazir Bhutto’s dynasty and her nuptial links with Asif Zardari cost her exile from Pakistan, for keeping foreign accounts and bridging colossal business deals for her husband.

Other female legislative members evolve in the parliamentary type. Except for Latin America, the presidential model is one difficult to turn feminist.

By contrast, in parliamentary systems, candidates appear on party lists, and the prospective prime minister is usually known by the voters. Whilst African problems are measured more heavily in the political spectrum than economic issues, we have to consider cultural factors which exist in both 'worlds'.

Therefore, the Westminster model in Mauritius would theoretically be conducive to electing a female prime minister.

Being 'primus inter pares' implies all executive decision making powers in the hands of the prime minister. They are not 'constrained' in this case. Jalalzai refers to titular posts where women's role is restricted to regulation and supervision. In either case, we have to admit that leadership and personality is a pre-requisite. Irrespective of party endorsement, Thatcher, Cresson and Sigurdardottir acceded to power not just as women, but also as full-fledged leaders and experienced politicians.

The case of Mauritius

Aged only forty-four, our democracy did not inhibit any other political model. One plausible reason for the laggardness of Mauritius in terms of gender politics could be the lack of training ground for female politicians. However this is too easy a conclusion because the local government provides the opportunity to do politics on a smaller scale. Also, being Member of Parliament is a different concept: legitimacy and sovereign power stems from the citizens who elected her. As she reaches towards the highest glass ceiling, the path gets narrower.

First, political experience is a prerequisite for all female politicians globally who begin their career as MP, then minister and eventually breaks the ceiling. Around two decades of continuous political life ensures visibility and experience across different ministerial portfolios and carves a place among the elites within the party.

Second, the rather effacing family life of female leaders boosted their credibility. Most of them are not married, divorced, married without children, or else grown-up children¹²⁹. Clearly this helped in promising full commitment to the post of prime minister or president.

Third, African women, in general, succeeded on their high educational background as well as possessing international expertise¹³⁰. However, it is important to note that all of them had worked before entering politics.

Fourth, party affiliation or loyalty could be a helpful catalyst in Mauritius' case. Running as independent would surely secure a place in municipal elections, but not necessarily MP, or even minister. Leaders of the grand parties did not change since 40 years. Within a party, the female candidate represents a support-gatherer, and as there are 50% chances for the party/coalition to rule, there is enough room provided to climb up the party ladder.

Also, even in presidential systems, female candidates rely on endorsement of a previous party leader. But this is not likely to work in a parliamentary system like ours because the potential female leader ought to be supported by a team willing to work along party lines and leadership. The popularity of the former party leader is key to ensuring continuity, thus pushing a woman forward, rather than another male (competitor), is in the interest of the party for that reason.

In Mauritius, the priority lies more on economic and political issues rather than promoting a woman at the top levels of government. For a fact, concerning the participation of legislators, senior officials

¹²⁹ See Appendix III

¹³⁰ Ibid

and managers, Mauritius has a long way to go, as twice more men are employed compared to women¹³¹. It means that a solidified glass ceiling is very much present in our country, and that women's evolution at the head of civil service remains at its infancy.

When it comes to the number of women candidates, Kadima and Kasenally (2005)¹³² think that it is "not a sufficient indicator of the commitment of party leadership to gender balance. Beyond the numbers, it is worth investigating whether or not female candidates are fielded in winnable constituencies". The recently passed Local Government Act 2011 provides for two-thirds of women on the candidates' list, thus ensuring that at least one woman appears in any group. Its contribution to electing more women to parliament and ensuring greater gender parity can be legitimately questioned in the light of the arguments presented earlier in this paper.

CONCLUSION

In sum, women in developing countries are more concerned with obtaining power with a social purpose. The developed world compares in that the existence of a solid glass ceiling and pervasive stereotypes narrow their path. For Mauritius, it appears that our democracy has not prepared the ground since a long time back; only last year has gender quotas become a reality in the law. Mauritius also resembles developed countries in the patriarchal sense, where women have to prove themselves politically to hope for an executive avenue. Women do not experience the need for correcting men's faults- although it would be a good reason to- and thinking of a challenger to experienced male politicians is a rather blurred concept.

The real woman power lies in empowerment in society. Only when that is done, will women in parliament have a real meaningful sense.

¹³¹ The ratio of female –to–male in legislation and public service is 0.30, with 23% women against 77% men. Jamaica, in comparison, the situation is reversed, where 59% women and 41% men are employed. (GGR 2011: 45)

¹³² Kadima K. and Kasenally R. (2005) "The Formation, Collapse and Revival of Political Party Coalitions in Mauritius: Ethnic Logic and Calculation at Play", *on website*

“Analysing poverty in Mauritius: A case study of Panchvati”

SEEGOOLAM Dameenee



By virtue of its past history, Mauritius has inherited an open economy and since independence in 1968, it has become thoroughly better having a democratic government and a welfare state with a range of social protection schemes. But still, the social protection system in Mauritius is not an ideal one as Mauritius is facing a number of challenges among which poverty is a current social phenomenon where many families are still poverty-stricken despite the provision of the above mentioned safety nets.

Undoubtedly, in Mauritius there are many households who are poor and require state interventions in order to find solutions and implement efficient policies for eliminating poverty; as such this research work is based upon an analysis of the poverty situation in Mauritius as well as providing various definitions of poverty- whether Absolute or Relative Poverty is prevalent.

An introduction of the research title introducing the theme of the title is elaborated. Furthermore, it focuses to what extent Mauritius is suffering from poverty despite having a sustained economic growth. The concept of absolute and relative poverty will also be analysed and special effects will be given on the Dr Rama Sithanen budget 2009, where the Eradication of Absolute Poverty is introduced.

My research is based on the concept of poverty: as such a case study of a northern village: Panchvati, will be thoroughly analysed and through a structured interview- questionnaire- it will be concluded on what basis the inhabitants of the village is considered as poor. The problems preventing development in the village, solutions and recommendation will be identified through primary data. Even the assistance provided to the inhabitants will be analysed.

Then, an assessment of all the findings will be carried out in the data analysis chapter where all facts will analyse based on findings. In the same trend, the questionnaire will be analysed and it will be proved to what extent the inhabitants of Panchvati is poor and what the solutions are for a better Panchvati.

Objectives of the research:

- The main aim in pursuing the case study of the northern village Panchvati is to critically analysed the concept of the village poverty and the face to face interview will enable me to know what are the real problems of the inhabitants, and what can be the solutions for eradicating poverty in that village.
- This research work will as such detect the problems faced by the inhabitants and provides efficient solutions to policy makers who will help in implementing useful policies for poverty eradication programmes.
- The living situation of the inhabitants is so critical and unhygienic that it requires urgent solutions.
- It will also identify solutions so that the inhabitants of the village are able to lead a better life.

Various International Organisations such as United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank have highlighted that poverty is a critical matter which demands urgent action. In Mauritius, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment along with the Central Statistics Office has designed the latest Poverty Analysis report of 2006/07 in order to provide figures determining whether Mauritius has a national poverty line. Thus, the Household Budget Survey- which is an important data sources for poverty analysis proves that in reality Mauritius there are many households who live below poverty line.

*“Poverty has existed for a very long time, and to different extents it remains worldwide still now in this 21st century. In primitive societies it was most often the case that everybody was equally poor, but more modern societies have generally tended to involve poverty being confined to an often substantial minority only - though this can often harm those concerned even more than universal poverty does.”*¹³³

*“Poverty is multi-dimensional and can be measured in either monetary or non-monetary terms”*¹³⁴. As such, this report provides an analysis of the distribution of government expenditure and some facts about poor households in Mauritius.

According to this Poverty Analysis 2006/078 of the Central Statistics Office, it is proved that *‘the proportion of households/persons below poverty line as measured by head count ratio increased during the period 2001/02 to 2006/07. The proportion of the poor households increased from 7.7% to 7.9%. In terms of number, poor households are estimated to have gone up from 23,700 to 26,400. During the same period, a higher increase is noted in the proportion of poor persons from 7.8% to 8.5%.’*¹³⁵

In order to determine whether Absolute or Relative poverty prevails in Mauritius, it is good to firstly differentiate between both and see which situation is prevalent in Mauritius. **“Absolute poverty involves people and their children having extreme difficulty in merely surviving. Such poverty at its worst can involve hunger amounting to starvation, often combined with inadequate shelter or housing and clothing. Absolute poverty has been common in more primitive societies, and is still common in many Third World countries in Africa, Asia and South America especially where it can afflict the majority of the population.”**¹³⁶ In a nutshell, Mauritius does not prove to have absolute poverty because comparing the poverty in Third World Countries, Mauritius do have a minimal standard of living- access to food, water and shelter- Basic Needs.

In fact, our society is encountering Relative poverty which *“involves the inability to obtain social necessities available to the majority and is often intensified by social exclusion”*.¹³⁷ But, the results from conducting a thorough survey, shows that no family is deprive from basic needs- meaning that they are assisted by various organisations and even the state to have access to food. As compared to African countries where people are dying due to food shortage, Mauritius does not face such extreme level of poverty. One must acknowledge the fact that poverty is tackled with due interest and efficient solutions and recommendations are designed in order to eliminate it. International aid for poorer countries comes from the Government aid in terms of direct loan or grant aid from one government to another, US government often the bigger aid givers. However, poverty remains current because this *“aid has generally gone to ‘friendly’ governments, rather than to the countries in greater need.”*¹³⁸

¹³³ <http://world-poverty.org/default.htm>

¹³⁴ Ministry of Finance& Economic Empowerment, Central Statistics Office- Poverty Analysis 2006/07. Feb 2010, 2nd Analytical Report. Government Printing Department. P. 13 <http://statsmauritius.gov.mu>

¹³⁵ Ibid P. 15

¹³⁶ ¹³⁶ <http://world-poverty.org/default.htm>

¹³⁷ Ibid

¹³⁸ Ibid

Furthermore, even the International Body aid- World Bank and International Monetary Fund have been bigger donor. Finally, charities of many kinds also give some aid in various forms, more often emergency or crisis aid but also a little longer-term aid. Most of the little international aid going to poorer countries has been ineffective in reducing poverty in the longer term, though there have been a few real success cases.

Nevertheless, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, remains in the first goal of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which shows that the aids received is not effective. There are two issues which have been preventing most governments from handling poverty. Primarily, because governments in both rich and poor countries do not see poverty-reduction as being any priority to them, and so do not make much attempt to reduce poverty. Moreover, the few governments in rich or poor countries that do see poverty-reduction as being of some priority to them and have commonly wasted much of the resources in unsuccessful attempts without implementing the best policy options.

The methodology chapter introduces the method used- primary data Questionnaire- to obtain information about the poverty situation of the case study conducted in the Northern Village Panchvati, consisting of around 50 families stuck in one pocket of poverty. The aim of this research is to actuate the causes of problems faced by the inhabitants arising from poverty and also to figure out o what extent they are poor- the specific fields where they face more difficulties.

The following chapter is the **Mauritian Context**, dealing with the present situation of Mauritius. It focuses on the poverty situation in Mauritius and also about the various programmes for poverty alleviation. Likewise, the contribution of the state- ministries- is also highlighted concerning the reduction of poverty. The Millennium Development Goals are also discussed and ultimately there a brief analysis of the contribution assessed by the National Empowerment Foundation along with the Decentralised Cooperation Programme. This chapter shows to what extent Mauritius encountering the problems related to poverty. According to World Bank, *'Mauritius has a poverty rate, whether measured as relative poverty, absolute poverty, or with respect to food poverty, which is considered as low. Using the relative poverty measure, the poverty headcount is estimated to be 8.7 percent, which is low compared to the average in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite its small size, regional variations in poverty exist in Mauritius. The incidence of relative poverty is higher in urban areas (12.4 percent) than in rural areas (8.0 percent).'*¹³⁹

Globalisation is one of the main reasons for the poverty situation of Mauritius since it has brought about an advanced dispersion in the distribution of income, with the gap between the rich and the poor steadily increasing. *'To the common observer, the widening gulf between the haves and have nots is becoming a cause for concern, the more so, as market forces seem incapable of pulling up the income levels of those living in situations of deep poverty.'*¹⁴⁰

From the local perspective, the country is facing (a) high unemployment among the educated and the unskilled workforce, (b) small persistent pockets of poverty (225 identified in 2010 by the NEF). In light of these problems, there comes a need to develop special funded programmes for combating poverty.

Virtually, it is of utmost concern to reform and free our Mauritian economy from the trap of poverty. In fact, poverty problems are multi-faceted and can be solved only by effectively policy revisions by the government as well as the non- governmental organisations. In respect of fighting poverty, Mauritius as an active member of the United Nations, is well aware of the need to eliminate this phenomenon in all its forms. Over and above the wide range of direct social security benefits which

¹³⁹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MAURITIUSEXTN/0,,menuPK:381984~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:381974,00.html>

¹⁴⁰ The National Economic and Social Council- Socio-Economic challenges and policy implications for Mauritius- NESC Report 14. May 2010. Pg. 1 and Pg. 10

currently account for nearly 12 % of Government budget, a number of programmes funded by both local and international agencies have been implemented or are ongoing to assist and empower the poor.

‘The National Empowerment Foundation is one of the main organisations, which is the umbrella body financing poverty alleviation projects, known as the Trust Fund in the past. It operates under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment. The main objective of the NEF is to implement projects and schemes with a view to assisting vulnerable and needy groups in improving the living conditions so that they can better integrate in our mainstream. In fact, the NEF implements the schemes through NGOs where emphasis is on active participation of the beneficiaries at grass root level. The objective of this approach is to enlist their commitment to ensure the success of the projects which are implemented to improve living conditions of the poor and needy groups.’¹⁴¹ Today, the National Empowerment Foundation works very hard for poverty eradication in Mauritius and this is possible only by its efficient and effective working method.

Consequently, the **next chapter deals with a scrutiny of the Northern Village Panchvati**. In this chapter there is a thorough analysis of the location of the village along with the history behind this poverty-stricken village. Furthermore, a brief background situation where a difference is noticed from the earlier Panchvati to that of the present one. Some facilities are now provided to the villagers- such as, housing facilities, food facilities and many more. My research work has enabled to identify the causes which are causing a hindrance to the development of the village.

The followings account for the obstruction in the progress of the village:

- **The housing system-** the depraving housing system discourages the villagers from having a better living standard and be indulged in poverty.
- **Education level-** illiteracy is omnipresent in the village which leads to voiceless villagers- not reacting to the poverty related problems.
- **Lack of jobs-** unemployment also is a prime cause from the progress of the village.
- **Health system-** no community healths centre in the village- meaning lacking medical care.
- **Transport system-** poor transport system where the inhabitants face difficulties in travelling other villages.
- **Lack of social development-** in terms of park, football ground, volleyball ground and many others.

Hence, in order to come out with an effective conclusion, a survey is conducted covering some thirty-five families out of fifty because the others were occupied in their respective task- cooking and looking at their children while others due to illiteracy, were not prepare to give an interview thinking that they are wasting their precious time in useless things.

Subsequently, the **data analysis chapter** deals with the assessment of all findings received through the questionnaire interview. Out of the 50 families, we have been able to interview 35 of them and the substance of the research provides realistic findings and conclusions since it covers 70% of the targeted audience. The responses received is thoroughly analysed so that analytical and useful information is derived. The aim of this data analysis is to find solutions and produce recommendations for the identified problems faced by the inhabitants, in an ascending order, i.e. from most pre-occupying needs to lesser urgent ones.

The analysis figures that the majority of the audience falls within the age range of 41-50 with 15 interviewees which insinuates that the majority of the head of the household are matured and grown-ups. As such, the households aging from 41-50 are active citizens, and it implies that these people

¹⁴¹ Some brief secondary data provided by Mr Dhiren Coopen- Case Manager at the NEF- 15 Feb 2012.

work mostly to earn a living. No social security benefits are granted to them except if they earn less than MUR 3,000.

The following aspects are fully analysed during the scrutiny:

- 1) **Marital status analysis-** All the 35 inhabitants interviewed are Hindu and 20 of them are married while 12 are separated, 1 divorced and the final 2 are widow/widower.
- 2) **Level of education analysis-** Most of the 35 interviewees are uneducated and their level of education is low which results in illiteracy. The highest level of education completed by the 35 interviewees are form one to form three, most of which are the women.

Most of the men have not gone to school. This eventually means that it is only the females who has gone to secondary schools but are housewives whereas the men, who never attended schools, are breadwinners

- 3) **Housing system analysis-** 30 households admit that they do not own the land where their houses meaning that they are not secure at all because once the owners come to claim for their land, the inhabitants will be left to nowhere.

The other 5 household maintain that they own their land and they even have their legal papers stating that the lands are theirs. The toilets and bathrooms system is another alarming problem. In the 35 inhabitants interviewed, most of them have separate toilets and bathrooms. But the bathrooms and toilets are just annexed to the kitchen meaning that it is an unhygienic situation where the inhabitants are prone to diseases.

The type of housing mostly prevalent in the village is of corrugated iron sheets

- 4) **Income earner analysis-** it is concluded that 24 interviewees are active earners while the other 11 are unemployed and they struggle to earn a living since they work on a one-off basis.

According to the inhabitants, it is figured that they face various financial problems due to lack of jobs. Thus, there is an urgent demand of job provisions for the inhabitants. Hence, the NEF is trying its level best in promoting trainings to the vulnerable people.

- 5) **Government contribution analysis-** accordingly, government aid have been in the spheres of Children's education, Housing system, Provision for street lightening, Electricity, Water supply, Telephone services, a recent built drain system to avoid flood. The inhabitants advocated that they are thankful to the contributions of the government

- 6) **Children analysis-** all the 35 interviewees admit that they send their children to school as transport is free and the government is also providing schooling materials books, uniforms, bags, shoes and many others. But, there is a need to have a school in the village

- 7) **The opinions of the inhabitants' analysis-** when asked about a definition of poverty, where it is surprising to note that mostly all of the 35% of interviewees gives same answers. They said that for them, *"poverty means no jobs, not enough food, and not enough income to satisfy needs. All they need so as to be out of poverty is to have a job"*.

30% admits that they are not satisfied with their way of living and expects government to do more.

- 8) **Causes of problems in order of priority according to the inhabitants' analysis-** **Education** is consider being the main problem where none among them has studied up to form five. The village is so remote that **accessibility** is another problem which prevents development. There is even an **absence of active institution**, which would help social leaders to move towards effective policies for development. Furthermore, a **lack public pressure** which means that they remain silent and voiceless- not fighting for any development for the village is another major problem. **Negative attitude** and **discrimination** among the inhabitants respectively, mainly the drunkards, are also proving to be an acute problem.

- 9) **Sources for solutions in order of priority analysis-** The inhabitants say that the **government** is the main actor who can help in poverty reduction in Panchvati. Then the **NGOs** and the **local authority** are also expected to be in close need of the inhabitants in order to better serve the society.

Formerly, personnel and collective effort are also considered as important in order to enhance development and terminate this pocket of poverty- Panchvati. Ultimately, the private sector is considered as being a facilitator for the betterment of the village.

- 10) It is a fact to acknowledge that the inhabitants were asked if ever they notice any improvement in the village. Some replied affirmatively while others ignore any development. Questions about improvements were asked in the following spheres: Housing, Education, Transport, Health Services, Leisure Activities, Infrastructure, Environment, Hygienic Conditions, Public utilities and Public Services.

In a bid of conclusion, the inhabitants are in need of: **“Better education, better transport facility, a health centre, hygienic conditions of living, environmental upgrading, recreational park, police station for security, women centre for women empowerment and street lighting in the entrance of the village.”**

As such, when asked whether they intend to leave the village- out of the 35 interviewees, 25 admits to leave the village soon while 3 advocate that they have no intension of leaving the village. On the other hand, 3 among them said that they are not sure of leaving the village and the remaining 4 have not even decide what to do.

This questionnaire survey has brought some basic information concerning the current living status of the 35 families who are interviewed. This questionnaire has help in determining the various fields where the inhabitants face problems. It has also enabled to detect the real sources of the problems and the sources of solutions.

The **Recommendation Chapter** is consider as the most vital as it provides solutions in order to end poverty in Panchvati. Primarily, what is needed in that village is **better infrastructure** in terms of: asphalted road, pavements, drains system and a new road which will enhance connectivity form the remote village to Riviere du Rempart. These developments will enable the inhabitants to enjoy useful public utilities.

Education is another pivotal element which is really needed in that village. Through the interview it has been noted that most of the inhabitants are poor and the level of their children education is poor as seen by their result slips. Thus, a school should be established as soon as possible and the distribution of educational materials should continue in order to encourage the new generation of Panchvati to be educated. Education, in terms of family planning also, is of great need for the women in order to control birth rate. Fewer the children, fewer are the mal distribution of food in a family. Therefore, the women must be taught about the various preventive methods of pregnancy. The NEF and the Government must provide more educational facilities for the children of Panchvati, in terms of schooling materials, school vans for pre-primary children. This will ultimately encourage the parents to send their children to schools.

The Government must provide more **Public Transport** for the inhabitants in order to travel to Rivière du Rempart. The interviewed inhabitants complained about the unusual bus services.

Efficient Organisations seeking help from NGOs, Private sector and local authority, must be formed in the village itself which will cater for the welfare and need of the villagers. These organisations should involve in good policy making process.

The National Empowerment Foundation should set up a **Special Committee** catering only for the village of Panchvati. In fact, the NEF must set up various committees each for a specific village which forms part of the 225 pockets of poverty in order to eliminate or help the poor people. The special committee set up for Panchvati will determine all the problems face by the inhabitants and will work on the policies in order to reduce the problems of poverty.

Ultimately, the special committee and various organisations must as such; put the entire above-mentioned projects in their agendas in order to execute the policies into effective outcomes. What is needed is to execute all the policies formulated for the elimination of poverty. The government must pay close attention to need of the poor.

The following are the proposed projects:

- I. **The Ministry of Housing and Land-** provide a piece of land to the inhabitants who are currently squatters.
- II. **The Ministry of Women, Child Development & Family Welfare-** be responsible for the children needs and also to educate the women about preventive methods for pregnancy through family planning.
- III. **The National Transport Authority-** provide better bus services
- IV. **Representatives (Leaders/ Presidents) of various organisations of Panchvati-** act as intermediate between the government and the inhabitants. They speak in the name of the poor households.
- V. **The Agricultural Research and Extension Unit-** promote plantation in order to provide job as planters to the unemployed households. This will also help the village in the environmental up grading- terminating the dumping spot.

The projects must start in May 2012 to end in December 2016. In the meantime, the inhabitants will be closely assist by the above mentioned parties

In the last chapter **Conclusion**, it is noted that the research work has help in detecting the problems face by the inhabitants. It is through the questionnaire survey and the case study of Panchvati that the most serious problems have been determined. The proposed projects will be put into the agendas of the leaders and will be eventually send to the Ministries in order to design effective and useful policies.

The expected projects are bound to be completed by late December 2016. In a time framework of four years, the projects should be ready and the specified proposed committees along with the collaboration of the various parties will enable the inhabitants to benefit from the expected development.

- A. No scatters as they will be given their own land.
- B. Control over birth rate
- C. Regular bus services
- D. The representatives of the village will talk in the name of the villagers for any needs.
- E. Proper environmental upgrading
- F. Better water and electricity supply.
- G. Hygienic conditions and a mobile health services.
- H. Better water and electricity supply.

- I. Financial support from sponsors will enable the unemployed to earn a living and enable them to start small businesses- like selling of eggs from their poultry breeding and selling of milk from their cows.

The implementation of these policies projects will change the current Panchvati to a better one where the inhabitants will not face many problems. They will be able to earn a living and have a standard of living. Thus, in a concluding note, it is good to note that my research work put emphasis only on one pocket of poverty namely Panchvati. There are still some other 224 pockets of poverty which demand urgent actions and policies in order to end poverty in Mauritius.

The inhabitants will thus, be equal as enjoying the various public utilities and services as anyone who is not poor. This project will enable the fifty families to be out of poverty and no one will recognise the village of Panchvati as a poverty-stricken village. It will transform from being a poor despot. The inhabitants of Panchvati will enjoy all the equal benefits, rights, facilities as any equal citizen of Mauritius.

Therefore, the other pocket of poverty should also be catered and Mauritius as a welfare state should fight and implement effective policies designed by efficient and expert advisers, in order to find solutions to the poverty related problems. The proposed projects will eventually be an example of successful policies of development which can be applied to eliminate the other pockets of poverty prevalent currently in Mauritius.

Education and its relationship with conflict management

An analysis of the educational reform that took place in Mauritius between 2005 and 2008 in the education sector.



M J Shelby Emilien

Education is undeniably the building pillar of a state and the foundation of national identity. This becomes even more important in states with strong ethnic diversity like Mauritius. As articulated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “*Everyone has the right to education... and it shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups...*”

Thus, as a developing state in highly competitive globalized world, education has more than ever a key role to play in promoting the harmonious development of the individual as well as preparing him or her to enter into the job market. But more importantly, the educational system has the responsibility to help keep the social fabric stable and diminish the recurrence of conflict. As a matter of fact, the stability of a plural society like Mauritius lies on its capacity to encourage knowledge and comprehension about each other’s culture and to ensure representation at every sphere of decision-making. Indeed, while Mauritius is often quoted as being an example of stability and well a sustainable democracy both regionally and globally, the reform of the educational system remains a major concern since decades. The fact that the idea has survived successive governments shows that there is to a great extent, a consensus that changes need to be brought to such an important sector. But the subject remains highly sensitive and prone to passionate debates.

INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation paper aims to examine an important educational reform that took place in Mauritius in 2005/2006, a reform that triggered passionate reactions in both the political and the public sphere. Indeed, this paper mainly analyzes the part of the reform that took place in the primary and secondary level, namely the significant changes that were brought to the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). In this sense, particular attention is paid on elitism, competition and equal education; recurrent themes associated to this critical part the Mauritian educational system.

Thus, basically, the Mauritian educational system is broadly based on the British system (a colonial legacy). It is composed of three to four principle levels where two of them are

subdivided in two levels respectively. The first is the pre-primary schooling for children of three to five years. Then the lower primary education grouped in standard one to standard three; upper primary which starts in standard IV to standard VI, the latter marking the end of primary education and national examinations with leading to the CPE. Secondary education starts from Form I to Form III (lower secondary), the two year ordinary level in Form IV and Form V leading to the School Certificate (SC); the two year advanced level in Lower VI and Upper VI with access to a Higher School Certificate(HSC). (Note that both the SC and HSC are international examinations under the Cambridge Examination Syndicate.)

The CPE, as explained earlier, has been subject to persistent criticisms throughout the years, for its propensity to an excessive elitism at an early childhood stage. Its principal task is an overall evaluation of primary education while at the same time being a selective mechanism for children to enter in secondary education. In turn, the CPE phase is directly linked to the Secondary education through the selection of colleges, which is itself determined by the performance of the student at the end of primary level, the level of the secondary schools which parents chose and the restricted number of seats in highly demanded ones (also known as ‘star schools’).

Purpose

While its aims and objectives is to analyze both the positive and the negative impact of the reform, the intention of the paper is to foster fruitful, dispassionate and objective debate by emphasizing fact-built arguments against emotional-based discourses that have been seen at the time the reform was being set into place. It is also worth noting that the 2005 educational reform had to be examined in parallel to the 2000 reform as the former was mostly a response to the latter.

Thus the aims and objectives of the dissertation are to:

1. Identify the aims of the previous reform and evaluate its effectiveness
2. Identify the aims of the 2005-2008 reform and its source
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the reform in tackling the problems it aimed to solve.
4. Examine the opposition’s arguments against the reform.
5. Discuss the lobbies’ arguments for the reform.
6. Assess the effectiveness of the reform.

Research Methodology

In order to achieve this, a mixed research methodology was adopted, consisting of the use of secondary quantitative data such as the statistics of pass rates in the period 2001-2005 and 2006-2008 for the purpose of a comparative analysis to assess the effectiveness of the 2006 educational reform in reducing failure rate. Moreover the use of secondary qualitative data in the form of documentation, relevant newspaper articles, reports/evaluation reports, and scholarly articles related to the subject. Nevertheless, due to the argumentative, analytical and exploratory nature of the dissertation, there was a need to have the point of view of some

stakeholders/actors who were involved in the debate or conceptualization of the reform in order to enhance the argumentation.

Moreover, the use of semi-structured interview has imposed itself as the most effective method because as it offers a certain degree of control to the interviewer by allowing him/her to set questions framework while at the same time letting the answers open-ended. This in turn gave more insight upon the respondents' personal point of views, thus enhancing the argumentation.

Moreover, two mini case studies were made in order to benchmark the Mauritian educational system with that of two well-known successful reformers and performers in education, namely Singapore and Finland. Indeed, while the former is very often quoted as a model from which Mauritius can inspire itself, the latter is known for being first-ranked for four consecutive years in the Program for International Student Assessment test (PISA). The idea was to do a cross-comparative analysis of the three educational systems in the field of curriculum and pedagogy; reduction of failure rates, elitism, competition and equal education. Hence, the questions that were attempted to be answered were: What element of the two systems can we emulate and what should be avoided? What lessons can Mauritius draw from the two systems, about competition, elitism and equal education?

Originality and Value

This paper sheds light on the origin and the underlying characteristics of the 2005 reform and at the same time, fills a substantial gap in knowledge as nothing has been written on that subject before. It explains how the reform was set into place, the challenges that it had to face, its intention, its positive aspects as well as its drawbacks. But above all, this work highlights the many difficulties that are faced when an educational reform is set into place and the recurrent mistakes that are made. The mini case studies permitted to have a more pragmatic view of the Singaporean model as it shows both its advantages and its underlying constraints while the Finnish case gives a new perspective to the educational reform debate.

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

Sheila Bunwaree, in her article entitled Education, Elitism and a more just society (12/01/2006) published in L'Express, examines the relationship between the elite, the need for change and the renewal of the educational system of Mauritius which would be more in line with the international context. She actually acknowledges that an elite is important for the construction of a society but she questions the nature of the elite found in Mauritius, or as she says it, "*Who constitutes an elite, how is an elite produced and how can we renew the already existing elite?* While it should be agreed that the educational system should be changed so that the so-called 'elite' can emerge from different segment of society, the definition of the 'elite' in the article remains unexplained and therefore ambiguous.

The questions that could have been asked are who are the elite? Are they only academics and intellectuals that influence decision-making or are they found in other frameworks such as sports and arts for instance? Nevertheless, regarding the nature of the curriculum and pedagogy in Mauritian schools, an important change that should be brought to the educational

system, as she further explains it, should be a shift from a “*banking education*” to a more “*dialogical education*”; the former is characterized by a top-down pedagogy where the children are *spoon-fed* by the teacher without any emphasis on analytical and critical thinking while the latter endeavors to develop the multiple intelligences found in the children. This can however be achieved only in an environment proper for the development of the child, something impossible in an ultra-competitive and “*rat race*” system as the Mauritian educational system.

Moreover, Lindsey Collen in her article *Equal Education without Unbridled Competition: How?* (16.01.2006), argues that “*In Mauritius, education is seen by parents not as a means of developing intellectual and creative potential in all the children of the land, but as a means by which their own personal children can pull their family up a social ladder...*” or to get out of poverty. In both arguments, the point is that education in Mauritius is not child-centered but more focused on prestige amounting from academic success. Yet, this article raises another issue not explored by Bunwaree, which is the relationship between equality and class inequality. Hence, inequality does not only derive from class inequality, but also translates into an inequality in ‘competition’ or as Collen emphasizes, “*...the real class issue is a much broader one than just the choosing of the intellectual elite, much broader than just getting some families out of poverty through education.*”

In a Marxist perspective, the article therefore argues that the social inequality is at the basis of inequality in the educational system, which consequently generates “*inequality in competition*”. In this case while the article views the reform as encouraging competition at the primary level, it asserts that “*competition should be discouraged in education*” because it undermines the harmonious development of the child by encouraging fierce competition. This is however debatable because a look at the globalized system will show that competition and capacity to adapt and innovate are the credentials necessary in order to survive in such a highly demanding global market. Analyzing competition in a Marxist perspective also implies that biases and antagonism against the capitalist system are easily encouraged. Yet this article has the merit to underline fundamental issues of the relationship between class, elitism and competition which gives another dimension to the debate on the 2006 reform, especially regarding the National colleges and the A+ system.

Bishop Maurice Piat, in his article *Education de qualité pour tous : A quelles conditions ?* (13-01-2008) questions the notion of quality education as proposed by the government. His major assumption is that the main problem of the Mauritian educational system is rooted in the “*ultra-competitive character of the examination of the end of primary education (CPE)*” which undermines a quality and equal education. While he accepts that the re-institution of Form VI colleges as a Form I to VI colleges, he however severely criticizes the marking system of the A+ which he perceives as a highly reprehensible measure which would further enhance the competition-driven nature of the CPE. Yet, an interesting point in his analysis is that he does not completely reject competition at the primary level but rather asserts that “*a high dose of competition*” is harmful and should be avoided. In a sense, his view tends to be more acceptable and reasonable than a complete eradication of competition.

Theoretical Framework: education, competition, elitism, equality and globalization.

According to Soonil D. Rughooputh, “*education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, and also something less tangible but more profound: the imparting of knowledge, good judgment and wisdom.*”(2002:pg1) and as emphasized by the World Bank report, in a more practical view, education is also about eradicating discrimination based on gender, race, social class resulting in political socio-economic educational disadvantage; rising concern about environmental and ecological issues while at the same time developing critical thinking and “*Problem-solving attitudes*”(2009:pg1).

In a sociological perspective, education forms core part in the socialization of human beings, starting from their home (informal education) where the individuals start to socialize with the family, then through schooling (formal education) where the individual familiarizes on the first place, with a broader environment composed of other people outside the family and thereafter helping its integration to society as a whole. In a functionalist perspective, education is perceived to maintain social stability and to resolve conflicts. This comes in line with the value of meritocracy which is very much characteristic of post-industrial societies. Meritocracy can thus be defined as “*the idea that in a system, with its duties, responsibilities and rewards, is based on equality of opportunity*” (Barnard, Burgess& Kirby: 2004: Pg. 145). While Functionalists base their notion of consensus on meritocracy as being a framework within which individuals can achieve their full potential, they fail to address the issue of class inequality properly as they assume the system to be *fair* through meritocracy. But if at the basis itself, the children start on an unequal footing, and then it can be argued that the functionalist idea of meritocracy is erroneous.

Thus, in a Marxist perspective, education is seen as a means to perpetuate the bourgeois ideology and reproduce capitalism. Consequently , meritocracy is seen as being an unequal framework which benefits the children coming from the ruling class so that “*those who succeed come to school already equipped to do so; they receive good responses from teachers and go on to prepare their children in the same way*” (Barnard, Burgess& Kirby: 2004: Pg. 146). Consequently, as Louis Althusser (1971) further puts it, “*the child is trapped in a position created for them by another group of people-the ruling class*” (Barnard, Burgess& Kirby: 2004: Pg. 147); so that in the end, the child is made to conform to the system and thus perpetuates it. Nevertheless, this idea poses numerous practical questions: how is it possible then that some systems have been able to be more inclusive and more equal? This theory tends to give a static view of society for if we take the case of Mauritius itself, we will realize that despite the long time that it took to bring changes in the educational system, efforts have been done to promote more equality by increasing access (as it was the case for the 2001 reform). Consequently, this theory fails to explain demand for reforms in post-industrialized states.

Post-modernists, however, reject any belief “*that there is a firm foundation of knowledge; they are critical of any attempt to offer a totalizing and definite explanations and theories*” (Barnard, Burgess& Kirby: 2004: Pg. 162). They assert that there are various possibilities about the types of curriculum and educational systems that can exist to cater the needs of different types of children. While they acknowledge the issue of class inequality, they however argue that there is possibility for change as the exploited segment of population can protest against the system through campaigns to change the educational system by bringing their provision. This perspective can however be criticized for its failure to grasp the political,

social and economic forces that shape education, as explained earlier. In addition, it can be argued that the post-modernist perspective of education is unclear and therefore lacks coherence. It has however the merit to underline the various possibilities that exist outside the Marxist, neo-Marxist and functionalist perspectives and have been able to grasp the fact that it is possible to have educational systems which are capable of catering for the needs of different types of children.

In this sense, Singapore attracted the attention of various governments in Mauritius due to its 'successful' education system. Added to this common example, one particular educational system which requires attention, is the Finnish educational system which has been for four consecutive years, been classified as the best performing system in the OECD countries, in the PISA conducted test. Yet it should be noted that the Finnish system has been very much identified as an equality-driven model in contrast with the Singaporean model identified as being elitist. Therefore, what is meant by elitism and equality? How are they linked to the idea of competition and performance?

Elitism is regarded by Mosca as a belief that certain persons have certain privileged rights in society and these elites in turn, forms part of the ruling class. In this sense, he relates modern elites of the industrialized system in terms of "*their superior organization*" (<http://www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art367.htm> (last visited: February 27, 2012). Subsequently, the relationship between politics and the *Elite* is obvious; but in the educational sphere, elitism is translated in various ways namely the type of schools that exist (private-owned or state-owned), the admission criteria and the assessment process. Private education for instance demarks itself from public education by its aim to provide "*high status skills and knowledge which lead to top positions*" (Barnard, Burgess & Kirby: 2004: Pg 147). In a capitalist system which encourages competition, the notion of elitism and performance are closely linked, the idea being that a substantial amount of competition will push people to optimize their capacity. Consequently, the elite, in an educational system is a symbol of success for both the establishment (thus at the same time bringing prestige to the latter) in which it emerges, but also for the society as a whole. This joins the Marxist idea of education and supports the views of Collen in her analysis.

Forming part of the elite is viewed as a catalyst to climb the social ladder, creating a situation where being renowned, recognized and rated becomes the primary focus of schools which base their pedagogy and curriculum on a result-oriented framework. The nature of the latter differs however from country to country, depending of the policy of their respective governments. Indeed whereas in some countries, talented students are encouraged to practice extra-curricular activities apart from their academic instruction, others tend to focus mostly on the academic performance. This is where the controversy lies: elitism or equal education? That is the question. If elitism is to be encouraged, then what variant of elitism should be encouraged? To what extent can the educational system be equal and what are its consequences? For Mauritius, the question becomes even more crucial as a developing state in a globalized world.

KEY FINDINGS :

The 2000 reform: Ranking Abolished and introduction of Regionalization

Characteristics

The 2005 reform finds its source from the protestation against the previous reform engaged in 2000 under the MMM-MSM coalition government. The four main aspects of the reform were:

- The **adoption of the ‘grade system’** (2001: pg. 8) by abolishing the so-called ‘ranking system’¹⁴²-characterized by the classification of students according to their results at the end of primary education, leading to the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). The primary aim was to eliminate the ‘rat-race’ competition that was driven by the quest for the top ranks in order to secure places in what is perceived as ‘star schools’.
- This measure was accompanied by the **‘regionalization’** process which consisted of admitting students to secondary schools according to the region in which they live. This stemmed from the fact that the allocation of colleges under the ranking system was done on the national basis irrespective of the distance factor, thus causing long time-consuming and costly travel.
- Moreover, in order to increase access to secondary education, the **construction of new secondary schools** and the **creation of the ‘pre-vocational stream’** for low-performing students were planned. This would in turn reduce/eliminate the 30-40% drop outs at the end of the primary, a major problem under the ‘ranking system’ as low-performing students were systematically eliminated from the educational stream after a second CPE failure. The aim was to create a situation where all children-irrespective of their academic capacity-would have the opportunity to benefit from education.
- Finally, one of the most significant changes brought by the 2000 reform was that of the **transformation of ‘star schools’ into Form VI colleges**. It is important to note that, as explained in the reform plan, the ranking system existed only for the purpose of securing a place in the ‘star schools’ (2001: pg20). Thus, in order to eliminate what is identified as the principal source of competition, all ‘star schools’ would be transformed into Form VI colleges and the other schools would be transformed into Form I to Form V colleges.

¹⁴² This is extensively explained in: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2001, *Ending the Rat Race in Primary Education and Breaking the Admission Bottleneck at Secondary level*. Republic of Mauritius.

Conclusively, the 2000 reform can be summarized as being an attempt to eliminate the excessive competition and increase access to secondary education. Moreover, it is worth noting that a revision of the curriculum was also devised to enhance the harmonious development of the child and a Numeracy and Literacy program was set up as well. Nevertheless, in practice the drawbacks and criticism were many.

Merits and Criticism

The greatest merit of the reform can be attributed to the fact that it has been able to be implemented. Indeed contrary to previous ones (namely Master Plan of Education in 1991 and the Action Plan in 1996 which were devised but never implemented (Bunwaree:2005:Pg9;WB Report:2009:Pg2) the reform did not take a long time to be implemented, thus showing the political will of the government to tackle the CPE bottleneck selection problem. Moreover, increasing access to secondary education by constructing more schools and the idea of eliminating the elitist mindset by transforming star schools into Form VI colleges can be very much acclaimed.

Yet, it is that rapidity of implementation and the regionalization mode of admission that attracted most of the criticism. Indeed, in practice, the 2000 reform lead to heavy criticism especially regarding the new policy of transforming 'star schools' into Form VI colleges. The protest came from the lobbies in favor of the maintenance of 'star colleges' (especially the opposition party and the students of 'star schools'), but more importantly, the then government failed to convince the Bureau d'Education Catholique (BEC)-which possess most of the private schools in which many 'star schools' were found- to convert its 'star schools' into Form VI colleges. This created a certain misbalance within the system as the competition still remained. Indeed, as most of the BEC star schools are found on the center of the island and that the regionalization process prevents a student coming from another region to join these colleges, this lead to a situation where only those living in the vicinity of these colleges could access it, whereas the others not.

Moreover, the setting up of Form VI colleges was not well implemented due to lack of training of the staff to meet the new reforms and adaptation problems to the new system were clearly felt. Lack of funding also impeded upon the implementation of new measures, especially the implantation of Computer laboratories in all primary schools and the construction of 116 libraries/reading rooms could only be done in a few areas. This was coupled with the inability to implement some new subjects in the curriculum such as citizenship as part of it was dropped. (ADEA 2006, *Initiating and Conducting an Experimental Peer Review Exercise in Africa: Mauritius 2000-2005 educational reform*. UNESCO).

Furthermore, the ambition of reducing stress at the CPE level, the elimination of the elitist mindset through regionalization, transformation of 'star schools' into Form VI colleges and

the grading system in replacement of the ranking system failed to produce concrete results. Indeed, the ADEA peer review panel noted that even with the grading system, stress was very much present because of the achievement-driven nature of the examinations. This perception inevitable continued to reinforce recourse to private tutoring thus creating inequality between those who could afford to pay for private tuitions and those who could not- which corrupted the very purpose of the reform itself.

It is based on these problems that the 2005 counter-reform took shape.

2005-2008 educational change: The Introduction of the A+ System and National Colleges.

Characteristics

Therefore the 2005 reform was characterized by:

- The creation of '**National Colleges**' i.e. reverting back of previously Form VI state colleges into Form I to form VI colleges. The reasons identified behind this measure were basically the high amount of protest against the previously Form VI college policy and the will to open the doors to the former 'star schools' to all students on a national basis. Yet it should be noted that the regionalization mode of admission was kept. Thus, access to National Colleges would be based on merit while on the other side, if parents do not wish to compete for the National Colleges; they could still have the choice to seek a place in the regional colleges-a choice-factor which did not exist in the previous reform.
- The adoption of **a new marking scheme: the A+ system**. This came hand in hand with the setting up of National colleges as the latter had a maximum number of 1260 seats. In this case, a student has to score four A+ in order to be eligible to for a place in those secondary schools, the A+ being the highest score. If the number of students scoring four A+ exceeds the number of available seats, then, attention will be paid to the overall average of each student to refine the results. The A+ system is therefore a selective mechanism to channel students into national colleges on the basis of merit.
- Moreover, in the reform plan entitled **Towards a Quality Curriculum-strategy for reform (2006)**, the government laid strong emphasis on the revamping of the school curriculum in order to make it more in line with the harmonious development of the child. Subjects like Civic education, arts or body awareness amongst others, were to be added to the curriculum so as to lay emphasis on the development of the individual as well as its academic knowledge.

Merits and Criticism

The greatest merit of the reform is its strategy for reform plan that laid more emphasis upon the quality of the content learned at school in contrast with a mere emphasis on access. Moreover, the fact that the parents were given the choice between competing for National colleges or staying within the regionalization framework can be acclaimed. This, in a sense, showed the will of the government to be more inclusive as it aimed to cater both for low performing students and the talented ones.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the sole fact of having the ‘mainstream’ curriculum, a ‘pre-vocational’ stream, the regional and the national schools creates a sort of segregation among children. As a matter of fact, the measure was qualified as being an unfair classification of children at an early stage by separating those who are ‘talented’ from those who are not. This would give the impression that student from regional colleges are second grade students as compared to those from national colleges. Consequently, the reform was considered as favoring the lobbies for the maintenance of ‘star schools’.

Moreover, lack of consultation with different actors of the civil society was also a problem that impacted upon the implementation of the educational reform, a problem that was seen in the previous reform as well. In the same idea, while the reform was supposed to be postponed and reconsidered for some times (namely after the Ministry of Education’s consultation with the BEC, an opponent to the reform and an important figure if education in Mauritius), the reform was however put on the top of the agenda again without any valid reasons, which was a surprise for many (Week-End; Sunday 12 February 2006). This created a situation where the reform was perceived as being more of partisan politics than of real democratic and public-policy driven.

Communalism also found its way in the debate as the reform was pinpointed as serving only a section of the population, which drove the MMM feminine wing to ask the debate not to be communal (Week-End; Sunday 12 February 2006). While the subject remains taboo and highly sensitive in a multi-ethnic society like Mauritius, communalism is however a recurrent issue that crops up during national debates, especially when it comes to the assumption that the *elite* comes from a wealthy section of society which seeks to maintain their condition by keeping the status quo (an idea expressed by Bunwaree and Collen earlier).

Another criticism came from the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child which expressed “concern that the proposed reform may introduce an element of unfair classification in accessing national secondary colleges based upon a high cut-off mark” (17 March 2006: Pg11) in its concluding observation on Mauritius. This reinstated the fact that the introduction of the A+ system as a marking scheme was indeed an elitist measure.

International comparisons: a cross-comparative analysis of the Mauritian educational system with the Singaporean and Finnish System

Key Findings

- Historically, just as Mauritius, both Singapore and Finland have a colonial history and Singapore is characterized by a multi-ethnic society which originates from successive migration.
- Mauritius, Finland and Singapore have six years of primary schooling but the Singaporean system offers a wider range of choice for students, after primary education according to their capacity. For instance, the end of primary education leads to the Primary School Leaving Examinations and based on their results, the children may go to: mainstream secondary schools, specialized schools for those who can benefit from a more practice-based curriculum, specialized independent schools for children with talents in specific areas, privately funded schools which offer more options for students or special education schools for children who need special attention.
- The Finnish case is on the other hand, substantially different from its Singaporean counterpart. Indeed, there are practically no private schools in Finland as all is government-owned and managed by municipalities. Moreover, Finland is well-known for the attention that it gives to children which require special needs. Indeed, it is not unusual to have two teachers in a classroom-one being a support teacher who would help a student have problems while the other teacher continues to do her class. This ensures that there is no segregation between children needing special attention and their classmates.
- Furthermore, it is widely agreed that the success of Singapore and Finland in the education sector lies in the importance that they give to their selection of teachers, the implementation of the curriculum & pedagogy and their prompt responses to the economic and social challenges that they had to face over time. Indeed, in Finland, a teacher is required to have a master degree and is subject to a vigorous selection before being eligible for the post. In Singapore, the National Institute of Education plays a strategic role in the selection and training of teachers. In both cases, continuous training of teachers and monitoring of educational reforms are key factors which accounted for their respective success.

Evaluation: Lessons from abroad and drawbacks

- In both systems, when reforms were implemented, they were done when taking into account the overall global aspect of their educational system. Thus, it showed that for reforms to be effective, changes cannot be made only in certain areas in isolation with the other components.

- However, the Singaporean model can be criticized for its very elitist system. In fact, the existence of private schools which have autonomy of admission raises questions about the type of ‘equal education’ that it claims to provide. As observed by Irene Y.H Ng (assistant professor at the department of Social Work, National University of Singapore) in her article Singapore’s educational system: Growing worry of social immobility published in the Strait Times (2011), she established that *“those whose parents were at the bottom tend also to remain at the bottom, whereas those whose parents were at the top tend to stay there”* (Strait Times: 2011:Pg.25). This immobility is rooted in the differentiated type of education delivered in Singapore where admission to *“prestigious primary schools is not based on merit but on factors such as location of the family home and the parents’ connection to the school”*. Moreover, the OECD report also points out that while the education sets high standards, it also inhibits innovation, thus giving Singapore an elitist connotation which corroborates with the Marxist point of view and Mosca’s idea of elitism.
- While trust in the institutions and teachers are identified as key factors which account for the stability of the Finnish educational system, it is important to note that Finland has a system that really fits the country’s social characteristic. Thus, reservations should be made when analyzing whether the Finnish high degree of autonomy in its school management¹⁴³ and accountability could be emulated elsewhere. Hence, it can be argued that this type of autonomy is prone to excesses if implemented elsewhere as the system is not endemic to the state in which it will be implemented. Conclusively, as Finnish Minister of Education Henna Virkkunen points it out, *“Any country should have an educational system of its own”*, meaning that the point is not just to copy from another system, but to develop a system that is adapted to the country’s specificities. In a sense, the Finnish educational system demonstrates the functionalist consensus framework.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In a world facing different types of crises and challenges, it is becoming essential for a small island developing state like Mauritius to redefine its education sector. The main problems that were identified as inhibiting factors to the successful implementation of reforms are lack of strong political will to change the situation, lack of consultation and national debates with the different actors of civil society, communalist debates, and lack of monitoring and politicization of the debate. But above all, as analyzed in the mini case studies, in order for an educational reform to be effective, it should consider the overall systemic aspect of the educational system. This means that each key stage of an educational system is intrinsically

¹⁴³ The inspectorate is quasi inexistent and the schools are managed by municipalities. The teacher has full autonomy in establishing the syllabus for his/her class. More information available in OECD (2011), *Lessons from PISA for the United States, Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education*, OECD Publishing.

linked to one another and as such, when a change is to be brought to a key stage, one should also consider the impact that it may have on the parts as well.

Furthermore, it is widely agreed that as long as the end of primary education would be result-oriented, it would be extremely difficult to take off the elitist mindset and promote a more holistic approach to education. In all, the 2005 reform shed light upon the government's difficulty to juggle on the one hand with the political lobbies, its responsibility towards the electorate and the broadly agreed idea that there is a need for change. Yet, imputing the blame on the government only would amount to mere scapegoating as the latter is only one stakeholder of the policy-making process. In this idea, it broadly agreed that the major problem that inhibits any insightful educational reform is the mindset of the population, a point also articulated in the World Bank report.

Moreover, as Dharam Gokhool admits it, "*the main difficulty was the implementation*", and in order "*to change the mindset, there should be results and to obtain results, pilot projects are needed*" (interviews conducted for this dissertation). This, consequently, gives rise to the idea that if there is no concrete proof that a project will work, its implementation will be problematic. Therefore, pilot projects as well as the inclusion of the civil society in the debate should be more emphasized to facilitate the implementation process.

Furthermore, while the 2000 reform was seen an important step towards a profound rethinking of the educational real goals, it also faced several implementation problems, some of which were repeated in the 2006 reform. As Dharam Gokhool further argues, "*the problem also comes from monitoring as it is a problem that successive governments bring reforms and counter-reforms, which creates a situation where there is no long-term policy making.*" Yet, as the World Bank report (2009:pg4) points it out, despite changes of government "*all successive governments since education have come up with strategies that might have been different-but the goals had been the same*", i.e. improving the quality and access to education to build a literate nation with skills that would help the country to develop.

Regarding the factors that inhibit profound educational reforms in Mauritius, Lindsey Collen argued that "*the irrational walls built against the use of the mother tongue in schools...*" has been one of the factors which contributed to the high rate of failure at the end of primary education. This argument as supported by both the ADEA evaluation report of the education reform of 2000-2004 and reinforced by the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child (41st Session 17 March 2006) when the latter recommended the state party (Mauritius) to "*develop a policy regarding the use of Creole in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) stage and at primary level...*" While the idea was articulated in the strategy for reform plan (2006: pg. 9), the implementation proved again, to be difficult but slow-paced progress has been noticed however. Still, the language issue is yet another aspect of the Mauritian educational system that should be reviewed.

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