Between Unfreedoms: The Role of Caste in Decision to Repatriate among Indentured Workers

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Abstract

Indian indentured labour migration followed slavery in providing cheap labour to British plantation colonies. To make this migration characteristically distinct from slavery, the workers were offered a free or subsidized trip back to their native country at the end of the indenture period. However, despite this guaranteed and subsidised return passage, only about a third of the workers returned to India. In this paper, we consider the role of caste in the decision to return home using data from ship registers for more than 16,000 Indian indentured workers in British Guiana between 1872 and 1911. Our results indicate that individuals from very low castes were significantly less likely to return home, in comparison to other caste groups. We argue that this was because while caste hierarchy played a very significant role in every aspect of the workers' lives back in India, their lives in the plantation economies did not allow the reproduction of caste hierarchies. Low caste workers who stayed on in British Guiana were therefore able to escape the unfreedom of caste. This trend is not robust for other caste groups. We find that the association of "higher caste" group and repatriation decisions is positive and significant, but the significance disappears when we include economic conditions. The results are robust when we include district level educational controls. We also find that women were less likely to repatriate than men, once again because women's lives were more restricted in India than in British Guiana.

JEL Codes: N35, N36, J61, J70, J16

Keywords: Caste, Gender, Repatriation, Indentured Labour

1. Introduction

Post emancipation plantation colonies required cheap, reliable, and docile labour to be profitable, and such labour was facilitated by the British Government through the provision of indentured labour migration from the Indian subcontinent to the plantation colonies. Between 1834 and the first world war, about 2 million workers travelled from the Indian sub-continent to British colonies in Mauritius, Jamaica, British Guiana, Trinidad, Natal and Fiji. The workers came from different religious and caste backgrounds mainly from the erstwhile United Provinces and lower Bengal but also other areas across the Indian subcontinent.

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The facilitation of indentured labour, however, was not without contention, with many fearing that it would be the "new slave trade"[2]. It was therefore imperative that indentured labour migration was "qualitatively different" from slave migration (Major, 2017). One area in which indentured labour was qualitatively different from slavery was in the requirement that indentured contracts had a fixed end with the workers being guaranteed a return trip home. Initially, the return home was paid for by the plantation but over time this requirement was eased, and the size of the subsidy was eroded. In British Guiana, following an 1879 act, three-fourths of the cost of the journey back for male workers was covered and five-sixths of that of women. By 1899, this had been eroded to half for men and two-thirds for women (Roopnarine, 2009).

Data indicates that despite this availability of a subsidized trip back, about two thirds of the indentured workers chose to continue to live and work in the colonies. While there is a rich historical and economic history literature that looks at the pull and push factors influencing entry into such contracts (Persaud, 2019; Tinker, 1993), there is very little systematic work that focuses on the repatriation of indentured workers to their home country at the end of the indenture period.

In this paper, we consider the incidence of repatriation and, in particular, the role that caste may have had on the decision to repatriate. We might expect the caste system in India, which manifested itself in the discrimination and stigmatization of individuals, to influence both the decision to migrate as well as the decision to repatriate. At the lower end, individuals belonging to 'untouchable' or Dalit[3] backgrounds faced social and economic discrimination because they belonged to that caste group. On the other hand, for individuals belonging to middle and higher caste backgrounds, travel across the sea would result in caste expulsion, a process known as *kalapani,* that could only be removed through an expensive ceremonial process. For these caste groups, therefore, the indenture contract would be highly expensive in social terms.

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[2] For example, British abolitionist newspaper the *British Emancipator* wrote in details about forced recruitment of indentured workers. Similarly, the *Manchester Times* referred to early indentured labour migration to West Indies as "A new slave trade… sanctioned by our professedly liberal ministry" (1st August 1838).

[3] Dalit is a term used to refer to individuals of the lowest or untouchable caste groups who fall under the category of Scheduled Castes in current day India. This term was popularised by lawyer, anti-caste activist and constitutional politician BR Ambedkar and is used widely to identify the community in a positive, politically dignified manner.

In this paper we look at how caste and gender discrimination and stigmatisation was associated with the repatriation decision of indentured labourers from British Guiana. Using archival data from ship registries, we investigate the association between the individual's caste background and their decision to return to India or to continue living and working in British Guiana. While caste hierarchies were embedded and institutionalised in British India, they did not get reproduced in the British plantation colonies. This implied that individuals of Dalit backgrounds were substituting one kind of unfreedom (that of indenture) for a different form of unfreedom (that arising from their caste position). Individuals of higher caste backgrounds, however, were facing social costs because they would not only lose their caste advantage in the colonies, they would also have additionally acquired the stigma associated with *kalapani*. Given that caste affects individuals differently depending on where they are located on the caste spectrum, we would expect it to have differential effects on the repatriation decision. To our knowledge there is no quantitative analysis of repatriation of Indian workers from the Caribbean.

Our unique dataset, compiled from archival material from British Guiana, allows us to trace the caste background and native place of indentured workers, as well as their repatriation decision. Our data has information about the individual collected in the ship registers as well as information about the districts that they came from in India. However, we have no information about local factors in British Guiana that may have played a role in determining whether the individual chose to embark on the return passage or forfeit it. We know, for instance, that land grants were offered between 1880 and 1902 and that about 90% of Indian children in British Guiana attended an estimated 28 mission schools[4] (Roopnarine, 2011). However, we are unable to include this information in our analysis as we do not have data for individuals on these issues. Having said this, we would not expect that these push factors to affect workers differently. Since the caste hierarchy did not get reproduced in the colony, we would not expect the push factors to be systematically different across castes.

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[4] For instance, between 1880 and 1902, about 3000 Indians received a land grant in lieu of staying in British Guiana (Roopnarine 2011). However, we do not have data on this. Similarly, data on colonial expenditure on education for 1917 shows that about 90% of Indian children in British Guiana attended an estimated 28 mission schools (Roopnarine, 2011).

One caveat to keep in mind is that our data relate to individuals who did repatriate. When we consider repatriations in our data, we are capturing those individuals who had both the intention to repatriate and the capacity to do so. We are unable to consider individuals who might have had the intention to repatriate but not the capacity or vice versa. For instance, in the case of upper caste individuals who did not repatriate, we are unable to identify whether their decision related to lack of intention to repatriate or a lack of capacity (economic) to do so. Additionally, we note that we do not have information on individuals who may have remigrated to British Guiana after their repatriation.

In section 2 we provide a background to Indian indentured labour migration and caste hierarchies in India and the Indian diaspora. In section 3 we set our hypothesis. In section 4 we describe the data and present our identification strategy. Section 5 discusses the results of our empirical exercise. We conclude in section 6.

2. Background

2.1 Indian Indenture Labour Migration in British Guiana

Between 1838 and 1917 about 238960 Indian Indentured workers travelled to work in the plantations of British Guiana, of whom only 75236 returned (Smith and Jayawardena, 1956). The workers were mostly young, with approximately 80 percent being less than 30 years old at the time of embarking on the journey (Smith, 1959). About one third of those who travelled were women. Workers came from across India, but the highest concentration was from United Provinces and Bihar.

The majority (83.6 percent) of these workers were Hindus from different caste groups (Jayawardena, 1966). While a large concentration of the workers were from agricultural castes (30.1%), artisan castes (8.7%) and low castes (31.1%), there was also a concentration of workers from higher caste groups (13.6%) (Moore, 1977). In what follows, we will describe the caste structure in India in the 19th century before we analyse whether it had an impact on the probability of repatriation of workers.

2.2 Caste in India and Indian Diaspora

2.2.1 Caste system in India:

The Caste structure in India is a system of social organisation that is characteristic of Hinduism in South Asia, although it is not restricted to Hinduism or to south Asia. The system can be traced back to ancient Hinduism, but it has been reinforced and solidified over time and continues to exist in India and the Indian diaspora. 19th and 20th Century India under British administration had particularly rigid forms of casteism (Dirks, 2001) which affected labour and production organisation and social interaction. In this section, we will look at the hierarchies that were (and continue to be) associated with this system and also note why the system was not reproduced in the plantation colonies in spite of the growing population of Indians from varied caste backgrounds.

Tenets in ancient Hinduism dictate that society is divided into four *varnas.* At the top of the hierarchy are *Brahmins*, the category of priests and learned men, followed by *Kshatriyas* or warriors, the *vaisyas* or the merchants, traders, and land-owning agriculturists. At the bottom of the hierarchy are *shudras*, associated with menial labour and landless peasants. Beyond the varna system were individuals and groups known as *antyajas* who were deemed untouchable. These individuals have been collectively classified as Dalit.

While *varnas* are the broad, text based, categorisation on which the caste system is built, the observable composition of the caste structure constitutes hundreds of *jatis which* denote professional, linguistic, religious, geographical hierarchies (Samarendra, 2011). There are hundreds of *jatis* within each *varna* and there are hierarchies within the varnas and between different jatis. Some features of the caste system are as follows.

Social hierarchy: As mentioned above, the caste system privileges some varnas over others. This social hierarchy is based on the notion of purity associated with being born at the higher end of the hierarchy and of stigma or pollution from being born at the lower end. In this rigid system, even physical touch from those at the bottom of the caste hierarchy could 'pollute' those above them. This has led to strict segregation of communities and rules as we will see below. Furthermore, within each varna, the *jatis* are also hierarchical, so that some 'untouchable' groups are more stigmatised than others (Nadkarni, 2003).

Physical Segregation and Endogamy: The notions of purity within the caste system led to rigid separation involving restrictions on intermarriage, inter dining and cohabitation. The requirement of endogamy is strict and is at the heart of the caste order, restricting marriage between *varnas* and quite often between *jatis*. While in castes where there are fewer women, men might be allowed wives of lower caste subject to some purificatory ceremonies or fine (Davis, 1941),the endogamy requirements are especially rigid for women. Chakravarti (1993) argues that the strict endogamy requirement especially for higher caste women is imperative for the maintenance of caste order[5]. These rules are likely to have affected the repatriation of women.

Similarly, the caste system imposes rules on inter-dining. While individuals may eat food cooked by people from higher caste groups, they were restricted in eating food from lower castes. A common result of physical segregation, social hierarchy and notions of purity and pollution is the exclusion of Dalits from using common village resources and the segregation of neighbourhoods by caste groups[6].

Educational and Occupational exclusion: In the rigid caste system, the varna categories are based on occupation and are hereditary, with mobility within varnas being strictly prohibited. This has, over centuries, ossified into a rigid division of labour whereby individuals from the lowest *varna* and dalit backgrounds were locked into manual, unskilled labour. Additionally, Dalit individuals had historically been excluded from educational institutions which would allow them to access skilled work. The system changed marginally from 1850s onwards when missionary education and Arya Samaj started providing education to Dalit converts. However,

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[5] Women are considered the "gateways to the caste system" (Chakravarti, 1993: page 579) and ensuring perpetuation of caste structure requires restriction to movements of women and seclusion, leading to strongly patriarchal structures. The penalty for degression for women was particularly high. For example, Hutton (1949) suggests "If a Nambudri [a high caste group] woman commit adultery she is outcasted and a funeral ceremony is performed for her as if she were, dead, as, indeed, she is to her caste, but if a husband take back an erring wife or a father receive home an erring daughter, they, too, are liable to be outcasted (page 109).
[6] Writing in 1944, Ambedkar gives an example of how physical segregation leads to material discrimination "Balais [A low caste group] were not allowed to get water from the village wells; they were not allowed to let go their cattle to graze. Balais were prohibited from passing through land owned by a Hindu, so that if the field of a Balai was surrounded by fields owned by Hindus, the Balai could have no access to his own field. The Hindus also let their cattle graze down the fields of Balais." (Ambedkar, 1979, page 40)

such education wasn't widespread and often replicated social conservatisms and pressures of the Hindu society (A. Kumar, 2019).

Material Privileges: Social hierarchy, occupational exclusion, and restrictions to social mobility implied that historically individuals from Dalit background were deprived of ownership to productive resources and land. They often lived and worked under conditions of hereditary servitude and bondage to higher caste landowners. For example, writing about untouchability in colonial south India, Viswanath (2010) notes that in the traditional land tenure, higher caste *mirasidars* (or village "share" holders) controlled land and labour in the villages. Conversely, under the *mirasi* tenure system, Dalit individuals were overwhelmingly landless labourers, workers paid in kind or hereditarily bonded workers (p 128). Viswanath also notes that the Dalit workers worked in conditions that were dubbed by British officials to be akin to slavery, noting that "pariahs [a Dalit group] in Madras, throughout the nineteenth century, were kept in miserable conditions, subject to violent physical discipline, often tied to particular plots of land and actively prevented from absconding or obtaining land of their own".

Given these conditions and exclusions, it is not surprising that repatriations back to India varied both by caste and gender. For the lower castes and for women, the conditions in British Guiana might well have been an improvement on the conditions that they left behind in India.

2.2.2 Caste system in British India

While the Indian caste system had survived through the influences of Buddhism, Mughal and Afghan rule and the spread of Islam, it had changed over the centuries and taken different forms. Within this system, the hierarchy of *varnas* were rigid but the *jati* ranking was fuzzy and had space for mobility (Srinivas, 1962). This rigid yet fluid system was institutionalised the British Census enumerators, who used caste as a unit of identification[7]. A salient feature of British rule in the Indian subcontinent was the use of caste identity to mobilise labour,

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[7] The British administration relied heavily on the state's interaction with the native (Viswanath, 2010). This implied, first, that the colonial religious policies were heavily influenced by the elite's presentation of historical tenets, which were biased in the favour of the upper castes. Second, the British were also more likely to tolerate land tenure systems that marginalised Dalit individuals as the elite landowners were highest tax payers and were instrumental in the smooth running of the state machinery (D. Kumar, 1965). A consequence of this toleration was that while slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1834, the British government turned a blind eye to Dalit slavery in India (Major, 2010)

organise property rights and govern. Starting from 1881, the British authorities started using the caste census for administrative purposes. Caste or 'tribal' identities were also used in different aspects of governance including military recruitment and land administration (Cassan, 2010). However, the ranking among *jati* categories was often arbitrary, setting the seeds for the ossification of caste identity (Srinivas, 1962). One legislative move that particularly contributed to increasing the intransigence of the caste hierarchy was the Criminal Tribes Act that was passed in 1871. This Act construed that all individuals belonging to some (usually lower) caste groups and tribal groups possessed criminal traits, thus institutionalising the already existing stigma against them.

Ship registers indicate that significant proportions of Indian indentured workers were from caste groups that were criminalised in British India. The caste group *chamar*, which constitutes about 15% of our sample in this study for example, were stereotyped with the crime of cattle poisoning in British India. Chamars were linked with leather work and were classified as 'tanners and leather workers' in various anthropological documents and censuses under the British Government. Mishra (2011) argues that from the 1850s, there was a massive witch hunt against Chamars, who were alleged to be cattle poisoners, indulging in the crime for the sake of hides[8]. The stigmatisation of chamars continued till the time of Indian Independence, and in some cases even continue to the present day[9].

2.2.3 Caste system in the plantation colonies

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[8] The stereotype of being associated with tanning work, and being criminalised for the actual or supposed crime of poisoning cattle was particularly problematic in the Hindu society where cattle is revered and working with hides and skin was extremely stigmatized. The stigma and discrimination against chamar communities persisted all through the British rule and continues after independence

[9] The following excerpt from a letter written by chamars of village Kheri Jessore, Rohtak to Deputy Commissioner in 1947 illustrates the kind of discrimination that they faced: "[T]he Jats of the village assembled in the Chopal and told us to work in the fields on a wage in kind of one bundle of crops, containing only about one seer of grains per day per man instead of food at both times and a load of crops, and annas 8 in addition which we used to get before above announcement was made. As it was too little and insufficient to meet both ends, we refused to go to work. At this they were enraged and declared a Social Boycott on us. They made a rule that our cattle would not be allowed to graze in the jungle unless we would agree to pay a tax not leviable under Government for the animals, which they call as "Poochhi" They even do not allow our cattle to drink water in the village pool and have prevented the sweepers from cleaning the streets where we live so that heaps of dust and dirt are lying there which may cause some disease if left unattended to." (quoted in Ambedkar, 1979 page 417).

While Hinduism continued to play an important role in the organisation of life in the colonies, most of the prominent features of the Indian caste system (as discussed in section 2.2.1) had to be dropped. All migrants to the plantation colonies were involved in similar, low skilled work and the European work routine did not allow workers to conform to the traditional caste-based organisation of labour. In addition, physical segregation and isolation were not possible either on the journey across the seas nor on the plantations themselves. Writing about the recruitment process, Bahadur(2013) notes "When they first arrived [jn recruitment depots], the emigrants were stripped of their clothes and given soap to wash in the Hooghly-again, side by side, the concerns of caste seemingly disappearing down the river, like the sacred thread that one migrant saw some high-caste Hindus discard as they bathed in 1898"[10].

Traditional norms regarding physical segregation, restrictions on caste mobility and control of sexuality were not a part of the lives of migrants in the plantation colonies. The workers were boarded in shared accommodation in the plantations where caste segregation was not maintained. Any spatial segregation that existed was on racial lines (rather than caste or religious lines) between the white management and the workers of people of colour (Hollup, 1994). A report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the treatment of immigrants in British Guiana notes that "married and single alike have to use passages, sheds euphemistically termed kitchens, and other convenience conditions to many others differing in caste and sometimes in race" (page 8). Bahadur wrote, describing the living conditions of her great grandmother, a single Brahmin indentured worker "Her (accommodation) was the "nigger yard" where 2600 immigrants, including 800 children lived in "logies" previously occupied by slaves. The single-story barracks, barely raised from the ground on short stumps, were partitioned into small rooms. In each room lived one family, however large, or a group of single men. Because the partitions did not reach the roof, every sound was communal" (page 83). Reports of the time also noted communal drinking water facilities that were shared

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[10] The migrant that Bahadur mentions is Munshi Rahman Khan, a rare voice that documented the indentured experiences in his book the Autobiography of an Indian Indentured Labourer.
Khan was particularly disturbed by the violation of caste and religious norms and regulations. He wrote "[I]n the depot, all ate together, and people slept with each other's wives… I don't like such behaviour… there is no caste or religion there" (quoted in (Bahadur, 2013).

by all castes. Life in such conditions meant that caste norms could not be maintained on the plantations.

Similarly, traditional norms in relation to morality were flouted. As were constraints on inter-dining and religious restrictions on food and alcohol. Mr Geoghagen, an Undersecretary to the Government of India, wrote in his report regarding emigration from India that he feared that "the temptation of cheap rum and the obliteration of caste have developed the habit of drinking, even in labourers of classes abstinent from alcohol in India." (Geoghagen report, 1874 p:117). He also noted that in plantation hospitals "East Indian immigrants, men and women, have been employed as cooks; … caste apparently, being entirely lost here. On one occasion, at Vriesland, we found a Mahomedan cooking the pork and dividing it out to his fellow-countrymen and co-religionists with great unction."

Traditional endogamy and gender norms were also not maintained, largely because of the skewed sex ratios on the plantations. Intermarriage and cohabitation were common. Sexual norms were far less rigid than back in India. Geoghagen notes that in the Indian population "the men are to the women nearly as three to one, and where the restraints of caste and even of religion seem to be completely relaxed".

While caste did not disappear in the plantation colonies, it was not useful for governance and therefore there was no reason to perpetuate it (van der Veer & Vertovec, 1991). In fact, plantation owners often preferred Dalit workers whom they saw as more docile. They also feared that the higher castes might want to hold on to their traditional hierarchy and thereby undermine the plantation hierarchy (Moore, 1977). There is evidence in multiple reports and correspondences that people from higher castes were insubordinate and had influence over the lower caste workers. For example, in some correspondence regarding an uprising by Indian workers against plantation management on the Devonshire Castle Estate of Essequebo in 1873, the management particularly expressed concerns about the ringleader who was a Brahmin[11]. Similarly, one author argued in 1893 that "as a general rule, in all strikes involving

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[11] The governor J Scott described this worker as "Ooderman [the ring leader] is a Brahmin, but a good workman, capable of earning, and who has earned, excellent wages, but from his high caste he possesses great

insubordination or threatened disturbances, the instigators are coolies of high caste who, however, do not appear prominently in the matter, other immigrants being put forward and made to figure as lead" (quoted in Moore, 1977 p 100). Plantation management and recruiters therefore expressed preference for lower caste workers. Immigration agent Oliver William Werner who provided evidence for a report to the British Houses of Parliament noted "we preferred the low caste. The higher castes we did not care very much for, because there was always a trouble about their food." (Minutes from Sanderson committee 1909: page 29). This preference for lower caste workers might also have translated into an inclination on their part to remain in the plantation colonies past the end of the contract.

3. Hypothesis

Based on the comparative caste experiences in the two countries, we set up the following hypothesis that we will empirically test:

Hypothesis 1: The caste identity of the indentured worker influenced their repatriation decision.

In particular, we argue that the discrimination associated with being a person of Dalit background in India would imply that such individuals were less likely to repatriate vis-à-vis other caste groups. On the other hand, the loss of caste privileges on the plantation colonies meant that individuals of high caste groups were more likely to repatriate.

Hypothesis 2: Gender of the individual plays a role in determining repatriation decision.

Along similar lines to the caste hypothesis above, we would expect that women (who were highly restricted in colonial India) would also be less likely to repatriate. This is because the working conditions of the plantations as well as the sex ratio in the plantation colonies would entail fewer gender restrictions on women. On the one hand this would mean more freedom for the woman in British Guiana while, on the other, this would also entail a loss of reputation back in India.

Hypothesis 3: Individual and regional prosperity factors may outweigh the effect of caste on the repatriation decision of individuals of high caste background.

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influence over the other immigrants on the estate, and, being a turbulent individual, exercises this power for wrong objects." (page 18).

This is because individuals of high caste groups may repatriate as long as the economic conditions are conducive to rectifying the caste expulsion associated with *kalapani.* We use individual heights (which were recorded on the ship registers) as proxies for their prosperity and test whether the caste effect is still valid after inclusion of this prosperity measure. We also consider whether especially difficult economic circumstances in the region of origin of the indentured worker in the year when the worker emigrated (this being the year that the worker is most likely to remember) are likely to override the caste effect.

4. Data and Empirical strategy
4.1 Data source and caste categorization

Our data was collected from the Walter Rodney Archives in Georgetown Guyana. These national archives hold ship registers that were compiled when indentured workers from the ports of Calcutta and Madras landed in British Guiana. The ship registers include information on sex, age, height, native place, caste, estate that they were allocated to and whether the individuals were re-indentured. For individuals who took the return trip back, the registers included the name of the ship which they took to go back to India and the year in which they did so. For those who did not take the return trip, the registers provided the number on obituary register and the year. For the purpose of this paper, we digitized a sample from each register corresponding to ships that set sail from 1874. While registers exist from 1844, in the early years of indenture, the registers did not include the place of origin and caste of the workers. Additionally, some of the registers from the early years are extremely weathered and the ink in the writing has faded making them too fragile and illegible to use.

Each register contains details of multiple ships that embarked from India. The indentured workers from each ship were sorted in the English alphabetical order of their names, and by gender thereby randomizing the workers within the ship. So, while the individuals may have travelled in groups according to family or caste/village networks, the entry in the registers did not cluster individuals into such groups. We scanned approximately one out of every 10 pages of all the registers between the period of 1874 and 1917 (where they were legible) and later digitized all the entries in these pages.

Using the strategy described in the Appendix, we categorize workers into 'Dalit' and 'High' caste. This is our primary explanatory variable of interest. Furthermore, we are able to identify Muslim workers who will not have faced caste stigma. As robustness check we will estimate the effect of being Muslim on repatriation. We also create a category of 'middle caste' but have not presented the results for that category in this paper.

4.2 Estimation strategy

We test our hypotheses by estimating the following model with repatriation as a dependant variable. We begin with

$$repatriate_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * Caste_{status_i} + \delta X_i + \rho * Year + \gamma * Ship + \varepsilon_i \qquad (1)$$

where $repatriate_i$ takes the value 1 if the ith individual has repatriated, and 0 otherwise. In separate models the variable $Caste\_status_i$ represents dummy variables that indicate whether the ith individual is Dalit or High Caste, taking values 0 or 1 in each case. X_i represents other individual characteristics that do not represent economic conditions of the workers (sex and age). The variable $Year$ represents the fixed effect for the year that the individual arrived in British Guiana, and the variable $Ship$ represents the fixed effect for the ship that they travelled in. β_0, β_1, δ, ρ and γ are coefficients of estimation and ε_i is the error term. Since an individual is born into their caste and sex, we do not expect to face a simultaneity problem in the analysis. However, we may be faced with biases because of omitted variables. In particular, we are unable to obtain direct data on individual income or wealth or their prospects in their home districts. To get around some of these problems, we include district level fixed effect dummies to control for unobserved factors in the worker's home district, and ship fixed effect dummies to control for any unobserved factors associated with the journey to British Guiana

We extend the above model in a number of ways to test the other hypotheses. We begin by including an interaction term between caste and gender to capture whether the decision of women to repatriate might have varied by caste.

Second, we test for the impact that economic factors may have on the decision to repatriate. This analysis is constrained by the paucity of data on individual economic conditions. In general, variables of interest would include personal/family wealth, expectation of income

opportunity back home and family status. In the absence of data on any of these factors, we include individual height as a proxy for affluence. In addition, we also include two measures of regional prosperity – natural shocks in the year before the individual's emigration and the government's land revenues in that year. Both these factors capture the economic conditions in the region and would therefore enable us to test for whether economic factors might have made a difference to the individual's decision to migrate. In what follows, we will discuss some of these variables in greater detail.

4.2.1 Height as proxy for affluence

Personal/ familial wealth of the individual is particularly relevant for the higher caste groups who would have to incur costs if they wished to undo their loss in caste position through ceremonial means. Since our archival material does not have any indication of personal or familial wealth or the level of affluence back home, we draw on the anthropology and economics literature (Arunachalam & Watson, 2018) to use height as a proxy for personal affluence.

Height is determined by nutritional intake and disease environment (Guntupalli & Baten, 2006). Inequality in food intake is correlated with social gaps in purchasing power. Figure 1 shows the distribution of height by caste group for our data. The distributions have similar spread (with an interquartile range of 22.5 inches for Dalit and 22 inches for high caste) but the high caste group has a mean of 0.95 inch greater than the Dalit group (p value of ttest=0.000). This is in line with findings from Brennan, McDonald, & Shlomowitz (2010) who observed increased height disparity between major castes in the period from the late 19th century until 1960s. and demonstrates the material hierarchy associated with a rigid caste system in India.

Height by Caste Group
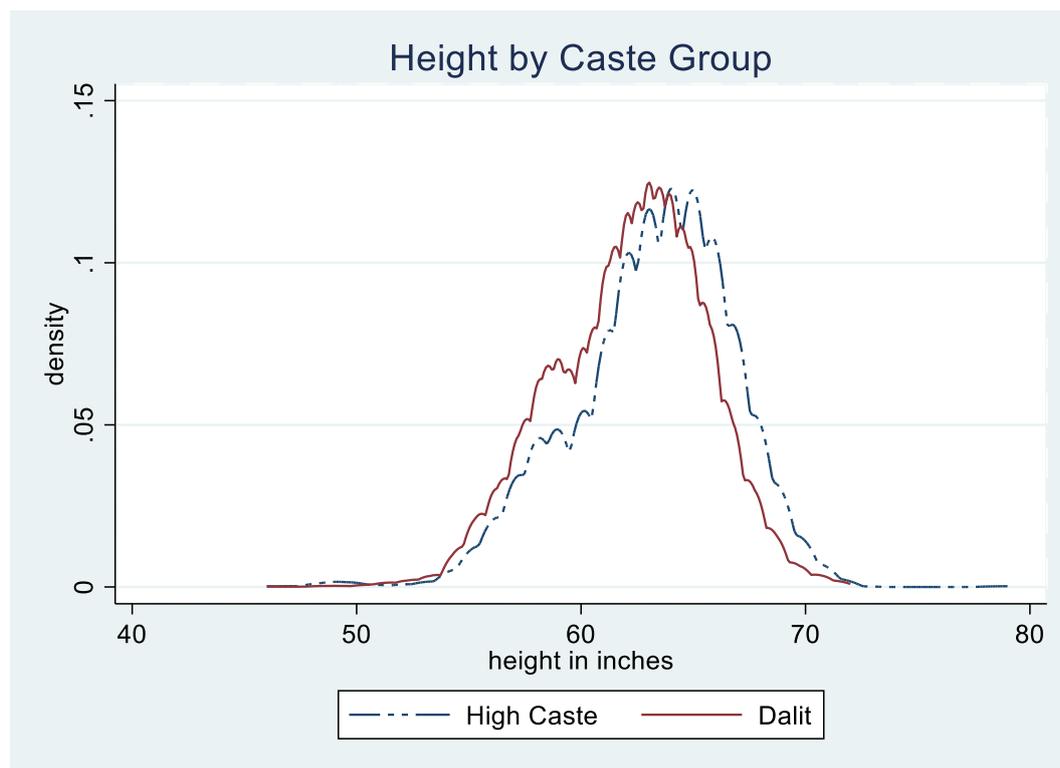
4.2.2. Regional Prosperity Factors
4.2.2.1. Natural Disasters

In all our models, we include district fixed effects to capture the influence of conditions in the region of origin of the indentured workers. This is especially important for the repatriation decision because it will influence how individuals perceive their opportunities back home. For a largely agricultural community, this may be affected by memories of natural disasters that occurred before they left home. Therefore, for a sub-sample of workers, we collected data on natural disasters (floods, famines, droughts) that might have occurred in the year prior to their travel to British Guiana. It is possible that such disasters might have pushed individuals into the initial emigration decision and might well influence their final decision to go back home. The data is obtained from the *District Gazetteers* compiled by the British Colonial Government and was not available for all the districts. We control for these disasters to see whether it makes a difference to our results.

4.2.2.2. Provincial Land Revenue

We include the provincial land revenue as an indicator of the economic conditions of the province that the worker would expect to return to when they went back home. This variable could indicate two things. On the one hand, high land revenue may imply high agricultural produce indicating prosperity. Of course, high land revenue may also indicate exploitative tax policies, though it is likely that high land revenues result both from greater prosperity and also more exploitative policies. This data was compiled using digitised data from *Statistical Abstracts from British India* (various years) made available by University of Chicago Digital South Asia Library (https://dsal.uchicago.edu/statistics/). As in the case of district shocks, we use the per capita land revenue for the year preceding their departure to the British Guiana. We might expect this to be relevant because it is the memory of economic conditions at home rather than the current reality of those conditions that is likely to have influenced repatriation decisions.

5. Results

We report the results for estimation of Model 1 in this section. For 12,755 of the observations we know whether the individual took the passage back to India, or if not, when he or she died in British Guiana. On average, individuals who did repatriate, repatriated about 14 years after they arrived in British Guiana (that is, 9 years after the end of their initial indenture). The average time spent in British Guiana prior to repatriation was the same across caste groups. Summary statistics for the variables of interest are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary statistics

	Not Repatriated			Repatriated			
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Diff in mean
Dalit	8436	0.435	0.496	3920	0.397	0.489	0.038***
High Caste	8436	0.398	0.490	3920	0.412	0.492	-0.013
Age	8568	21.585	6.759	4013	21.755	6.269	-0.170
Female	8161	0.302	0.459	3762	0.272	0.445	0.029***
Height	6972	62.489	3.437	3341	62.726	3.323	-0.237***
Natural Disaster in the previous year (District)	6449	0.072	0.258	2864	0.087	0.281	-0.014***
Natural Disaster in the two previous years (District)	6631	0.144	0.351	2950	0.14	0.347	0.004
Natural Disaster in the three previous years (District)	6667	0.208	0.406	2959	0.195	0.396	0.012*

Per capita government land revenue in the previous year in 10s of Rs (Province level)	6869	0.080	0.043	3042	0.077	0.042	0.003***
level of illiteracy amongst men in the previous year (District)	5865	0.945	0.017	2627	0.946	0.015	-0.002***

Table 1 suggests that on average there are significantly more Dalits who did not repatriate, than those who did. While there are slightly more individuals of high castes who repatriated than those who did not, this difference is not significant. There are more women who did not repatriate, and on average, more taller people repatriated. Contrary to expectation, more of the individuals who repatriated came from districts that faced some natural disaster in the year just preceding their arrival (8.7%) than those who did not (7.2%). However, the trend reversed when we considered natural disasters in the two and three years before their arrival. A smaller proportion of those who repatriated faced at least one natural disaster in the two (by 0.4%) or three previous years (1.2%). On average, individuals who did not repatriate came from provinces that had higher per capita tax revenue. This may indicate that individuals who did not repatriate came from provinces that had more exploitative tax policies.

5.1 Caste and Repatriation

In table 2 we test our hypothesis that caste influences the repatriation decision of the individual. We find that on average, being Dalit lowers the probability of repatriating by about 4 percentage points. The result remains similar when we include district level fixed effects (of their native district in India). High caste individuals on average were more likely to repatriate by 3 percentage points. In columns (1) and (2) of Table A.3 in the Appendix we run the estimation for the caste group "chamar" and find that the results are similar to those in Table 2. Dalit individuals of Chamar background are between 4 and 6 percent less likely to repatriate (depending on whether or not we include district fixed effects). In Table A4 in the Appendix we look at the association between caste groups and repatriation, taking the middle castes and non-hindus as the reference category. We find that Dalits are less likely to repatriate vis-à-vis the middle castes and non-Hindus, whether or not we include district fixed effects. For high caste groups, the coefficient is positive and significant on average, but the significance disappears when we include district fixed effects. This indicates that, for Hindu high-caste groups, caste is not the only determining factor.

Table 2: Caste and Repatriation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
VARIABLES	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal
Dalit	-0.188***	-0.039***	-0.211***	-0.043***				
	(0.047)	(0.010)	(0.046)	(0.009)				
Hindu High Caste					0.155***	0.032***	0.123**	0.025**
					(0.055)	(0.012)	(0.059)	(0.012)
Constant	-1.298***		-0.636		-1.435***		-0.802	
	(0.131)		(1.440)		(0.132)		(1.450)	
N	11,397	11,397	10,757	10,757	11,397	11,397	10,757	10,757
R-squared	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Individual controls included: sex, age and age square. All estimations include year fixed effect, and ship fixed effect. Reference category for columns (1)-(4) includes Hindu high castes, middle castes and non Hindu (Muslim and Christian). Reference category for columns (5)-(8) includes Dalits, middle castes and non Hindu (Muslim and Christian). The table reports coefficients and marginals of logit regression.

5.2 Gender and Repatriation

Our second hypothesis suggested that caste and gender may have intersectional effects on repatriation decisions. This would be because women, especially high caste women, faced additional restrictions to mobility and sexuality beyond the norms associated with caste. Columns (1) and (2) in Table 3 report the effect of being women on repatriation without controlling for caste. On average women were less likely to repatriate than men by about 2 percentage points. In columns (3) and (4) we additionally control for whether or not the individual is Dalit, and we interact being Dalit with being female. We find that while women, in general, are less likely to repatriate, Dalit women are about 6.5 percent more likely to repatriate in comparison to non-Dalit women. In columns (5) and (6), we find that upper caste women are about 4 percent less likely to repatriate than non-upper caste women (i.e. women from the middle castes and Dalit women). These results could reflect the fact that in colonial and precolonial India, while all women faced absence of freedom, high caste women faced more stringent gender norms because of Brahminical gender codes. The gender norms were more flexible for women of lower and untouchable castes because of existential compulsions and labour market requirements (Bandyopadhyay, 2004).

The colonial administration in India under the British brought about some significant changes in social mobility and caste relations which resulted in tightening of gender norms in India. For example, Gupta (2008) notes that early 19th century Hindi didactic literature directed high caste women to distinguish themselves from Dalit women by covering themselves up, not speaking too loudly, not conversing too much with other women. This would separate the "morally chaste, virtuous and ideal" upper caste women from "loud, raucous, unfeminine, uncouth, uncultured and shameless" Dalit working women.

As a robustness check, we also estimate the effect that gender-ethnicity interaction has on individuals of Muslim background. Muslim individuals would not have faced with caste hierarchies to the same extent that Hindus did, but would have norms around gender. We find that Muslim women were about 8 percentage points less likely to repatriate in comparison with non-Muslim women.

Muslim and upper caste Hindu women faced an extra layer of spatial segregation beyond those associated with caste. For affluent households, the living arrangement of the house was divided into *sadar* (outer) and *andar* (inside). Respectability implied that women would be restricted to the *andarmahal* (inner chambers) (Amin, 1996). Any woman who exited *andarmahal*, whether for economic or other reasons, was deemed lacking virtue. Thus, for high caste women who travelled to British Guiana as indentured workers, repatriating would imply additional stigma beyond that associated with *kalapani.* This is because they would have ventured out of the *andarmahal* and they would have interacted with individuals of lower castes in their travel and work in the plantation colonies.

Table 3: Effect of the intersection between caste and gender on repatriation decision

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
VARIABLES								
Female	-0.019*	-0.019*	-0.046***	-0.046***	-0.011	-0.011	-0.006	-0.006
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Dalit			-0.058***	-0.062***				
			(0.010)	(0.010)				
Female*Dalit			0.065***	0.066***				
			(0.018)	(0.019)				
H high caste					0.044***	0.036**		
					(0.014)	(0.014)		
Female* H high caste					-0.043*	-0.039		
					(0.025)	(0.026)		

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Muslim							0.039** (0.018)	0.057*** (0.019)
Female*Muslim							-0.084*** (0.030)	-0.086*** (0.032)
Constant	0.180*** (0.022)	0.278* (0.157)	0.206*** (0.022)	0.374 (0.373)	0.168*** (0.022)	0.336 (0.378)	0.174*** (0.021)	0.351 (0.362)
Observations	11,749	11,238	11,397	10,902	11,397	10,902	11,397	10,902
R-squared	0.033	0.058	0.036	0.061	0.034	0.058	0.034	0.059
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effect	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Additional individual controls included: age and age square. Estimations include year fixed effect, and ship fixed effect. Table presents results of LPM estimation.

5.3 Caste, Prosperity and Repatriation

We turn now to consider if the caste effect persists when we control for individual and regional economic factors. In Table 4, we combine economic factors with caste to see the effect on repatriation. In Columns (1) and (2) we add height as a proxy control for familial affluence in addition to our main explanatory variable "being Dalit". We find that the caste effect persists. Individuals of Dalit background are still approximately 4.5 percent less likely to repatriate. The table indicates that including natural disasters (in one, two and three years preceding the arrival of the workers- columns 3 and 4) and provincial land revenue (columns 5 and 6) does not affect the sign or significance of the Dalit coefficient. Therefore, even after controlling for regional economic prosperity, Dalit individuals were less likely to repatriate to India.

On the other hand, we find that for high caste individuals (columns 7-12), the caste association is no longer significant once we bring in the district and province level economic factors. This indicates that for high caste individuals, economic factors overrule caste factors in the repatriation decision. This might not be surprising given that, for high caste individuals, a return to India (and to their privileged caste position) would require some expensive rituals to be paid for.

Table 4: Combined effect of caste and economic factors on repatriation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal
Dalit	-0.218***	-0.045***	-0.190***	-0.038***	-0.178***	-0.036***						
	(0.049)	(0.010)	(0.061)	(0.012)	(0.055)	(0.011)						
H High Caste							0.094	0.019	0.074	0.015	0.067	0.014
							(0.061)	(0.012)	(0.085)	(0.017)	(0.079)	(0.016)
Height	0.026***	0.005***					0.027***	0.006***				
	(0.009)	(0.002)					(0.009)	(0.002)				
Natural disaster y-1			0.234	0.047					0.225	0.045		
			(0.153)	(0.031)					(0.153)	(0.031)		
Natural Disaster y-2			-0.125	-0.025					-0.123	-0.025		
			(0.132)	(0.027)					(0.131)	(0.026)		
Natural Disaster y-3			-0.076	-0.015					-0.077	-0.016		
			(0.107)	(0.022)					(0.107)	(0.021)		
Land revenue					1.194	0.243					1.214	0.248
					(1.452)	(0.296)					(1.444)	(0.295)
Constant	-1.564		-3.571***		-2.607***		-1.744		-3.638***		-2.766***	
	(1.683)		(1.108)		(0.968)		(1.694)		(1.108)		(0.963)	
Observations	8,816	8,816	6,347	6,347	7,198	7,198	8,816	8,816	6,347	6,347	7,198	7,198
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Individual controls included: sex, age and age square. Estimations include year fixed effect, and ship fixed effects. The variable "Height" represents height of the worker as reported in the ship registers. Variable "Natural disaster y-n" represents whether or not the district that the worker comes from faced a natural disaster in the nth year preceding their arrival, n takes value 1 to 3 (only for United Provinces and Bengal Presidency). The variable "Land revenue" measures the provincial level land revenue in the year preceding the arrival of worker. Table presents coefficients and marginals from logit estimation.

In Table 5 we use another method to confirm whether individual economic factors override caste factors by comparing the effect of caste on repatriation before and after 1899. While initially the return passage was completely free to the indentured workers, following Law 12 of 1879, indentured workers were required to contribute a part (one fourth for men and one sixth for women) of the return passage. The proportion that the workers were required to pay was further increased in 1899 with a subsequent amendment to the law. Men were now required to pay half and women a third of their return trip (Roopnarine, 2011). Thus, after 1899, the return trip became substantially more expensive for the workers. Other changes to the conditions attached to the return trip were that it could initially be claimed after 5 years and from 1854 it could be claimed after 10 years. There was no time limit to the return clause, and the last trip return trip of Indian indentured workers was made in 1955. The return trip was allowed for the worker and their families. From 1892, children of indentured workers were also eligible for the return trip irrespective of age and place of birth.

Columns (1) to (4) in Table 5 report the effect of being Dalit on repatriation before and after 1899 while (5) and (8) reports the same for high caste individuals. The results indicate that high caste individuals were significantly more likely to return before 1899, while the results are no longer significant when the trip back became more expensive from the point of view of the workers. On the other hand, for Dalit workers, the results are negative and significant in both cases. This reinforces our argument that for high caste Hindus the economic conditions play a role in repatriation decision, while for Dalit, the caste conditions overrule other factors.

Table 5: Effect of Caste on repatriation before and after 1899

	Pre 1899		On or after 1899		Pre 1899		On or after 1899	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
VARIABLES	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal
Dalit	-0.152***	-0.032***	-0.302***	-0.057***				
	(0.053)	(0.011)	(0.084)	(0.016)				
H High Caste					0.218***	0.047***	-0.046	-0.009
					(0.071)	(0.015)	(0.100)	(0.019)
Constant	-0.683		-1.986***		-0.958		-2.060***	
	(1.439)		(0.376)		(1.441)		(0.363)	
Observations	6,439	6,439	4,222	4,222	6,439	6,439	4,222	4,222
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

District fixed effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Individual controls included: sex, age and age square. Estimations include year fixed effect, and ship fixed effect. Table presents coefficients and marginals of logit regression.

Our results indicate that high caste men were more likely to repatriate than those from Dalit backgrounds. However, for these castes, when economic conditions in their province of origin are taken into account, we find that the probability of their return is no longer significant. To understand why this may be the case, we need to re-consider the issue of kalapani (loss of caste when travelling across the seas) and the costs of 'regaining' this caste. Hindus of high caste were restricted from travelling abroad and faced excommunication if they failed to comply. Famously, MK Gandhi was excommunicated from his caste following his return from the United Kingdom (Gandhi, 1948). However, during the British administration, foreign travel was reasonably frequent and individuals could be recommunicated following a purification ceremony that included a payment of fees to administering Brahmins (Hutton, 1949). This was understood by the workers, administration and management in plantation colonies. Geoghagan wrote about Brahmins- "by crossing the sea, caste is lost by all those who have any caste to lose. This loss, however, can be easily repaired on returning to India, by performing the prescribed penance." (193). The expense associated with caste recommunication was often quoted as being exorbitant. For example, William Middleton Campbell a sugar merchant and plantation owner noted that on return to India workers would "have to pay very heavily to priests for having broken their caste by crossing the sea" (Sanderson committee minutes: page 231). Similarly emigration agent Oliver William Warner noted that when the workers returned "his relations, if he has plenty of money, will make him welcome; if he has none, he has lost his caste as a rule, they are not very kind to him" (page 20). Given the costs of this ceremony, it is perhaps not surprising that economic conditions in the province overshadow the impact of caste. A higher caste individual returning to India without being able to afford the ceremony would effectively be ostracised and may find it easier to remain in British Guiana, where caste was not an issue.

5.4 Extensions

The marital status of the worker may affect the worker's repatriation decision. Unfortunately, for most workers, we have no indication of whether or not they were married or had families

when they migrated. However, for about 25% of the workers in the sample, the register provides a marriage registration number. This does not mean that the rest of the workers were not married- it simply indicates that these 25% of the worker were definitely registered as married in British Guiana. As a robustness test, we run our models for a subsample of the workers who were definitely married in British Guiana.

While we do not know whether such workers were with their partners at the time of repatriation or death (if they didn't repatriate), we know that they definitely had a partner in British Guiana for a period of time. Echoing our earlier results, we find that caste effects continue to remain significant for Dalit, while they are no longer significant for high caste individuals (Table 6). This also indicates that while marital status may have an impact on the repatriation decision for individuals belonging to the high caste, it did not matter for Dalit.

Table 6: Association of Caste and repatriation decision for definitely married individuals

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal
Dalit	-0.274**	-0.058**	-0.348**	-0.071**				
	(0.120)	(0.025)	(0.137)	(0.028)				
H High Caste					0.102	0.022	-0.023	-0.005
					(0.159)	(0.034)	(0.190)	(0.039)
Constant	0.599		-0.919		0.532		-0.802	
	(2.007)		(2.398)		(1.996)		(2.401)	
Observations	1,990	1,990	1,811	1,811	1,990	1,990	1,811	1,811
Individual controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
District fixed effect	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Individual controls included: sex, age and age square. Estimations include year and ship fixed effects. Table presents coefficients and marginals of logit regression.

Finally, in Table 7 we include a control for the level of male illiteracy in the district that the worker came from in the year prior to their departure to British Guiana. One factor that is often quoted in the literature to affect migration decisions is human capital. For example, Abramitzky & Braggion(2006) noted that human capital affected European indentured workers' servitude location and duration. The Indian indentured workers travelled at a time when the majority of the India population were illiterate. We do not expect the level of education to affect the migration decision of the workers. However, the level of literacy in the

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district they came from may have an impact on what opportunities were available for their children. For districts in United Provinces and Bengal, we have included an additional control for the percentage of illiteracy in the district that the worker came from in the year preceding their travel to British Guiana. Data for this variable was compiled using Census Reports for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911. We have computed projected level of illiteracy for the remaining years. Our results (Table 7) indicate that including this control doesn't affect the influence that being Dalit has on repatriation. However, the results for high caste are no longer significant.

Table 7: Combined effect of caste and level of illiteracy in home district

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal
Dalit	-0.195***	-0.040***	-0.200***	-0.040***				
	(0.060)	(0.012)	(0.060)	(0.012)				
H High Caste					0.119	0.024	0.093	0.019
					(0.093)	(0.019)	(0.094)	(0.019)
Male Illiteracy	2.932	0.599	8.265	1.670	2.777	0.568	8.068	1.633
	(2.002)	(0.408)	(7.054)	(1.423)	(2.000)	(0.409)	(6.989)	(1.413)
Constant	-4.531**		-9.977		-4.431*		-9.837	
	(2.270)		(6.853)		(2.275)		(6.783)	
Observations	6,098	6,098	6,082	6,082	6,098	6,098	6,082	6,082
Individual controls	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
District fixed effect	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Individual controls included: sex, age and age square. Estimations include year and ship fixed effects. The variable "Male Illiteracy" measures the percentage male illiteracy in the individual's home district in the year preceding the individual's arrival to British Guiana. Table presents coefficients and marginals of logit regression.

6. Conclusion

In this paper we look at the effect of social identity on the repatriation decision of indentured workers from British Guiana. Economic theory predicts economic, demographic, and human capital factors will affect the migration decision. For Indian migrant workers, these factors mattered as long as the worker was not from socially marginalised castes. For such individuals, caste prevailed as the more significant factor determining repatriation decision. The gender of the individual also played a role in their repatriation decision, often in the opposite direction to the caste effect. This is a result of the additionally strict gender norms associated with the caste system in India, especially for women of higher castes.

Our results indicate that high caste men were more likely to repatriate than those from Dalit backgrounds. However, for these castes, when economic conditions in their province of origin are taken into account, we find that the probability of their return is no longer significant. On the other hand, for those who had 'no caste to lose' or for women who faced significant restrictions at home, leaving British Guiana was not so attractive. The colony offered them greater freedom than they had at home, especially once their tenure as indentured labourers was over.

7. Appendix

A.1 Caste categorisation
In the dataset of 16811 individuals, we are able to identify caste names for 16230 individuals based on the column "Caste" in the ship register. In most cases the caste name constituted names of *jatis* (or subcaste/sub clans within the varna system). However, in some cases the categorisation was broad (examples include "oriya", "zamindar", "Musalman") or would specify occupation (fisherman or washerman).

Table 1 reports the division of the sample according to religion. We built the category "Muslim" to include individuals whose caste corresponded to the following: "musalman", "nau muslim", "sheikh", "pathan". Note, it wasn't possible to categorize individuals who belong to the different *jati* categories but may have converted to Islam. The category Christian corresponds to individuals who were categorised as Christians in the caste column.

Table A 1: Sample by religion

Religion	Observation	Percentage
Hindu	13,877	85.50
Muslim	2,330	14.36
Christian	23	0.14
Total	16230	100

There were about 500 unique caste names in the sample. The caste groups with most members from the sample are as follows: "Chamar" (15.29%), "Ahir" (9.71%), "Kurmi"(5.25%), "Kori"(3.9%), "Kahar" (3.9%), "Thakur" (3.56%),"Rajput" (2.85%), "Chattri" (2.58%).

To see whether caste influences the individual's decision to repatriate, we have categorized caste groups according to various segments depending on whether they are high, middle or

stigmatized castes. For the purpose of this paper we have used three sources of information to categorize caste hierarchies 1) Texts on caste that were written in British India[12] 2) the list of contemporary Scheduled caste (SC)/scheduled tribe(ST) and Other Backward Class (OBC) and 3) the list of castes that fell under the Criminal Tribes Act (and were after independence categorized as Denotified Tribes Act).

The texts of caste that were written in British India specify the traditional occupation of the caste group was. In some cases they give indication of whether the caste is stigmatized. The category of Hindu High Caste in this paper was generated using these texts. In terms of the varna system, this category constitutes individuals who belong to Brahmin and Khsatriya groups. We have made a category High Caste which additionally included non-hindu high caste groups the "Pathans" and "Sheiks", that was used as robustness test (not presented in this paper).

We also tried categorizing the "middle" castes using these texts. The categories "Agricultural Caste" and "Artisanal/Trader Caste" were created for this purpose. However, there wasn't enough information on all the caste groups to be able to create a complete categorization. Furthermore, even within the Agricultural Caste and Artisnal/Trader Castes some were more stigmatized than others. For examples, artisans and traders who worked with raw hide or blood were stigmatised compared to other traders. Similarly, agricultural castes also had hierarchies. Lower end agricultural castes didn't own land and were often forced to being bonded labourers with higher caste groups.

To get around this problem of incomplete information from the texts, we used contemporary caste categorisation by Independent India to categorize the caste groups. The category of Other Backward Class constitutes caste groups that fall amongst the middle caste groups but have been historically financially backward.

The stigmatized castes have been categorized using three sources. The first source is again the texts on castes, this was used to build the category "Low/Stigmatized Caste". Some low

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[12] These texts include: W Crooke (1896) *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh;* H H Risley(1891) *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal;* Edgar Thurston (1909), *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*

castes fell under the "Notified/Criminal Tribe" Act of British India, which effectively criminalized individuals of some caste groups. The categorization "Under Notified/Criminal Tribe" constitutes individuals who fell in this caste. Finally, we also use the contemporary SC/ST list. The current day SC/ST list is with the view of providing positive discrimination to oppressed castes. Since it is a category based on historic classification, we expect individuals currently in the SC/ST groups to have been stigmatized in British India. Note that while in post cases the three categories "Low/Stigmatized Caste", "Current Day SC/ST" and "Under Notified/Criminal Tribe Act" coincide, the caste "Ahir" which was under the Criminal Tribe Act doesn't fall under the current day SC/ST category. In the paper we define Dalit as being from "Current Day SC/ST". We have also run our estimations for the other definitions of stigmatized castes. The results are similar and can be made available on request.

Table A 2: Sample by Caste Categories

Category	Observation	Percentage
Hindu High Caste	2553	16.72
Agricultural Caste	1648	10.79
Artisanal/Trader Caste	1051	6.88
Current Day OBC	6049	39.62
Low/Stigmatized Caste	6054	39.65
Current Day SC/ST	6420	42.05
Under Notified/Criminal Tribe Act	5094	33.36

A.2 Effect of Being Chamar on Repatriation

In Table A3 we present the results for on Dalit caste- chamar. As mentioned before, Chamars formed the largest caste group of indentured labour migrants. We find that on average being from the Chamar caste group reduces the likelihood of repatriating. The caste and gender interaction can also be seen for this caste group, though it disappears when we include district effects.

Table A.3 : Association between being from chamar caste and repatriation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Chamar	-0.043***	-0.058***	-0.057***	-0.070***
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.017)
Female			-0.025**	-0.023**
			(0.010)	(0.011)
Chamar*Female			0.040*	0.034

		(0.022)	(0.022)
Constant	0.204***	-4.929***	0.190***	0.285*
	(0.025)	(1.115)	(0.022)	(0.156)
Observations	11,749	11,238	11,749	11,238
R-squared	0.034	0.060	0.035	0.060
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effect	No	Yes	No	Yes

A3. Association between Caste and Repatriation

In table A.3 we report the association between caste status and repatriation when the middle caste and non-Hindus are taken as the base category. On average, Dalits are about 4 percent less likely to repatriate than the base category, while high caste Hindus are about 2 percent less likely. However, when we include district fixed effects, Dalits are still less likely than middle castes to repatriate (by about 5 percent points), but the association between being high caste and repatriation is no longer significant vis-à-vis the middle caste. This gives us an indication that other factors may be relevant for Hindu high caste groups

Table A 4. Association Between Caste Groups and Repatriation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Coefficient	Marginal	Coefficient	Marginal
Dalit	-0.187***	-0.038***	-0.234***	-0.047***
	(0.055)	(0.011)	(0.057)	(0.011)
Hindu High Caste	0.104*	0.022*	0.063	0.013
	(0.057)	(0.012)	(0.062)	(0.013)
Constant	-1.341***		-0.828	
	(0.136)		(1.457)	
Observations	11,000	11,000	10,383	10,383
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effect	No	No	Yes	No

Note: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Standard errors clustered by register and ship. Individual controls included: sex, age and age square. All estimations include year fixed effect and ship fixed effect. Reference category includes middle castes and non-Hindu (Muslim and Christian). Table presents coefficients and marginals of logit regression.

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