

# **THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCKRAT FAMILY BUSINESS; 1905 - 1924: A TEST OF THE 'ETHNIC ENCLAVE' THEORY IN THE LATE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY ZAR.**

Founding and running a business, no matter how small, is a demanding task, and only a fraction of those who start are ultimately successful. The basic resources needed – labour and capital – are no different for ethnic entrepreneurs than others.

## **INTRODUCTION**

- **Ismail Dockrat was a Sunni Bohra Muslim.**
- **He was a poor peasant farmer from Asna, west coast of India.**
- **Dockrat migrated to South Africa in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.**
- **He settled in Pretoria on his arrival here.**

# **The Theory of 'Ethnic Enclave.'**

- **Residential clustering of members of the same ethnic community in a neighbourhood. (Aldridge and Waldinger, 1990 and Basu in Casson *et al* 2006).**
- **Creation of entrepreneurial opportunities.**
- **Offers 'protected market' and 'captive prices' for ethnic goods and services.**

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- **Characterised by ethnic resource mobilisation.**
- **Formation of ethnic social structures.**
- **These consist of the networks of kinship and friendship around which ethnic communities are arranged.**
- **Ethnic institutions.**

# **The case of Ismail Dockrat in the ZAR**

- **Ismail Dockrat settled in Pretoria Central when he arrived in the ZAR.**
- **Creation of an Asiatic Bazaar around 1887-9. This was an 'ethnic enclave.'**
- **Forced removals (1903) resulted in the establishment of a 'Coolie Location' adjacent to Marabastad. (ethnic enclave)**
- **Composed of poor and destitute Asians.**

## **(Continued)**

- **1905 relocated to Pretoria North. (wide and open market)**
- **Opportunities may also arise outside the 'ethnic enclave.' (Aldridge and Waldinger, 1990)**
- **Dockrat identified an opportunity and pounced on it.**

# **Ismail Dockrat in Pretoria North**

- Pretoria North was a main stream market that lacked retail service providers.**
- Dockrat set to provide such a service in the form of a hawking venture.**
- He was alone with his young family of five.**
- White farmers became supportive of his business venture.**
- With time the business slowly grew.**

# **Why Dockrat failed in Marabastad?**

- **Highly prohibitive environment in Marabastad.**
- **Asians were excluded from job opportunities, leading Indians to explore business opportunities.**
- **Business conditions in Marabastad tended toward proliferation of small units and intense competition, hence high failure rate.**
- **Those that survived generated scanty returns for the owners.**



## **(Continued)**

- **Dockrat found a niche in the services sector which he quickly filled in Pretoria North.**
- **Worked hard to succeed thereafter. (strategy of self-exploitation)**
- **Provided uniquely different services to the community such as year round operation.**

# Conclusion

- **Immigrants in Pretoria created impoverished communities that could hardly sustain ethnic businesses.**
- **Added to this was Dockrat's state of poverty upon his arrival and settlement in Pretoria.**
- **Thus within the context of the ZAR, the theory of 'ethnic enclave' was nullified in the case of Ismail Dockrat.**