African Roots of South Asians

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Abstract

In this paper, I will be exploring the historical links between Africa and South Asia, with particular reference to South Asians with African ancestry. The number of South Asians in this category are small in comparison to the total populations of these countries but the numbers are significant and cannot be ignored. How do these communities fit in with the local societies? What has been their role? Issues of identity and belonging will be considered with specific reference to cultural loss and maintenance through language and music.

Introduction

My interest in South Asian communities with African ancestry began when I encountered the Afro-Sri Lankan community in Sirambiyadiya, a small village, few miles inland from Puttalam on the northwestern coast. Puttalam is an important port city and Ibn Batuta, the 14th century Moroccan traveller, entered the Island from this point.

My research on the current status of Indo-Portuguese, a creole language, which should have died out with the end of Portuguese rule in 1658 led me to this community. In this small African community Indo-Portuguese still survives albeit spoken largely by the elderly. How
had this lingua franca survived among people with African ancestry? And what were the mechanisms which ensured that survival?

Most Sri Lankans are not aware of this small African community, though its grandmatriarch, Ana Miselyia, and others were portrayed on Sri Lankan television in a documentary during the 1970s. I learnt about their past, from their own accounts of their history. Various oral histories had been handed down to them. They told me that their ancestors were brought from Mozambique, Madagascar, Goa and Portugal as slaves and soldiers, by the Europeans who dominated the Island for almost half a millenium. But there are more subtle and far-reaching reasons which have a bearing on their current position. To understand this we have to move beyond the shores of Sri Lanka.

Joseph Harris (1996) reminds us that free and forced movement of Africans were simultaneous processes. But movement of Africans to South Asia was fuelled by the slave trade. Between 900 AD and 1900 AD, an estimated 12.5 million Africans were moved across the Sahara, Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to unfamiliar lands where they were re-rooted (Lovejoy 2000; Roberts 2006). The number of Africans involved is not different to that of the transatlantic slave trade which was concentrated over a few hundred years. But easterly movement was spread over a longer period of time and spanned a wider geographical area.

Movement of Africans eastwards covers a wider economic and social range of activities than Atlantic slavery. It has deeper roots and is complicated by European intervention. It is accompanied by the parallel process of free labour movement and however few, the rise of slaves occupy administrative, military, religious and political roles. But this model does not help us account for the legacy and significance of slavery as the migrants have been assimilated into new societies. The otherwise silent African presence is alive in music and dance.

How do we approach the study of slavery in the East? Does this process help us understand the fate and status of those of African descent in contemporary Asian societies? Is it important to recognise African presence in South Asia?
The Indian Ocean slave trade involving concubines, eunuchs, soldiers and servants was not confined to a plantation economy. It was also complicated by European commercial expansion and by the free moment of African seafarers, sailors and merchants, which ran alongside and parallel to the slave trade. This trade in humans moved millions of Africans both overland and across the world’s giant waterways. But we must not forget that free movement of African seafarers, sailors and merchants to Asia did not stop whilst the slave trade was continuing.

Asians are becoming more interested in their past as their countries are becoming economically powerful. But the historical picture is untidy and patchy and there are gaps in our knowledge which we cannot fill. The long duration of easterly movement inevitably led to several streams of migration involving various points of origin and destination.

Why were Africans moved over vast distances, across land and sea, to South Asia? Their presence has left little trail in historical documents, but Africans are conspicuous in some of the roles that they performed, even though anonymously as soldiers, jockeys, musicians, entertainers, sailors, servants, palace guards, bodyguards and cooks.

Migration of Africans to Asia has been a continuous process across the centuries. But why is this not widely known? The obvious reason is that slaves are marginal people. Although Afro-Asians live in urban areas, they are lost in the diversity of South Asia’s cosmopolitan cities. They are often taken for African tourists until they begin to speak in the local Asian language!

Compared to the one billion plus population of contemporary India, the estimated 60,000 Sidis may seem small. The statistics that we have are patchy and represent 25,000 Sidis each in the states of Gujarat and Karnataka, about 10,000 in Andhra Pradesh and smaller numbers in other states such as Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Identifying Africans poses a challenge to scholars (de Silva Jayasuriya 2006). Terms such as Africa and Africans are problematic. Those who we call Africans today were associated with the area that they originated from for example, Zanj or al Habashat, and were
called Zanzibaris or Habshis, for example. At other times, their religious affiliation gave them an ethnic label. Cafre (non-believers) became an ethnonym for Africans as Arabs called non-Muslims. Another Arabic word, Sidi or Shidee has become the most commonly used ethnonym in the subcontinent. But Africans are also known by other terms such as Makranis, Chaush and Baburu, in South Asia, which associate them with a geographical location or a role they played.

**Africans in the Military**

From various travel accounts, we can glean something about the occupational role Africans have played. When Ibn Batuta sailed down the southwest coast of India in the early 14th century, his ship had “fifty Abyssinian men-at-arms”. They were the guarantors of safety in the Indian Ocean and if there was one Abyssinian on a ship, it was avoided by Indian pirates and idolators (Gibb 1929/1986: 229-230). In Calicut (South India), Batuta noted that the owner of the Chinese junk that he embarked on also had Abyssinians. They were carrying javelins, swords, drums, trumpets, and bugles and stood with their lances on both sides of the door acting as guards.

Africans were prominent in several parts of India. Again we know that Ibn Batuta, referred to the governor of Alahapur, Badr, an Abyssinian and a former slave of the Rajah of Dholpur (Baptiste, McLeod & Robbins 2006: 127). About a hundred years later, the ruler of Bengal, Sultan Rukn al-Din Barbak Shah (1460-1481), had 8,000 African slaves, some of whom he elevated to higher ranks. When Barbak Shah’s grandson, Sikander II, was deposed in 1481, after ruling for only a few months, his successor, Jalal-ud-din Fath Shah (1481-1486), attempted to control the power of the Habshis. In 1486, however, under the leadership of the chief eunuch, Sultan Shahzada, the Habshis conspired and murdered Fath Shah, and gained the throne of Bengal (Pankhurst 2003). But this was not a united Habshi rule. Indil Khan, a Habshi commander-in-chief, avenged his master’s death by murdering Shahzada.
Indil Khan then ascended the throne as Saif-ud-Firuz, mainly due to pressure exerted by Jalal-ud-din’s widow and the courtiers of Gaur (the capital of Bengal).

Off the west coast of India near Mumbai, the island of Janjira was a trading post for Africans long before it became their powerbase from the early seventeenth century. From 1618, for three and a half centuries, Janjira was a princely state ruled by Africans. Its geographical boundaries extended on to the western coast of India and were not confined to the island. From 1791, Africans also ruled another state, Sachin, which is in today’s Gujarat (McLeod 2006). A year after India’s independence, in 1948, both these states together with other princely states became part of the Indian Union. But Ex-Royal Africans, still live in India and are well respected locally.

Elite military slavery, though not unique to Africans or South Asia, paved the way for some slaves to reach high positions and wield much power. Faaeza Jasdanwalla, a granddaughter of the last Nawab of Janjira discusses the process by which the Sidi Sardars (African Chiefs) appointed a new leader based on a system of merit, aptitude and capability, and were not constrained by social rank and hereditary links (de Silva Jayasuriya 2011a). But as Faaeza Jasdanwalla (2011: 56) emphasises, this democratic system which enabled a high degree of social mobility was replaced by hereditary succession, a century before India regained her independence.

A few Sidis have been able to reach the echelons of power and engage with India’s elite. The best-known is Malik Ambar, a free-born Ethiopian, sold to slavery by his parents. As an elite military slave, Ambar was purchased by the Peshwa (Prime Minister) of Ahmednagar, Cengiz Khan, himself a Habshi and a former elite slave (Sakar 1955: 6). Through military and strategic capabilities, Ambar himself became the Peshwar of Ahmednagar and held on to that office for more than a quarter of a century (1600 to 1626) until his death. He appointed Sultans of his choice, from the Nizam Shahi dynasty, who were merely figureheads. Ambar built waterways, mosques, palaces, tombs and schools. His tomb in Ahmedabad (in today’s state of Maharashtra) is testimony to the respect that he commanded.
But not all African soldiers were elite slaves. Many South Asian rulers engaged African soldiers in their armies. In Andhra Pradesh, Sidis from the disbanded African Cavalry Guard of the Nizam of Hyderabad, are nostalgic of their lost past; Indians respected them when they accompanied the Nizam on his parades. But a year after India’s independence, when the princely states were absorbed into the new India, these Sidis (also called Chaush), lost their important role. Impoverished, they now live in an area called AC (African Cavalry) guards (Minda 2007).

The story is similarly bleak in Uttar Pradesh, where descendants of the Nawab of Oudh’s African Bodyguard and Cavalry Guards live on the poverty line. During the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the turning point of British presence in India, ancestors of these Sidis fought bravely and loyally for the Nawab (Llewellyn-Jones 2011). Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the Nawab had a female bodyguard and the British were not aware that they were fighting women soldiers until their deadbodies were found in the Sikander Bagh in Lucknow, the site of a fierce battle between Indians and the British which marked the turning point of British presence in the sub-continent.

It is clear that Islamic rulers valued African military skills. Whilst this demand was supplied from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zanzibar, for example, another network operated with different sources of supply. Expansion of European commerce, international trade and territorial gain were an impetus for African movement to South Asia. The need to defend territories from invading forces also was a contributing factor. Intra-Asian activities in the Indian Ocean were interrupted from the 16th century by Europeans, who established themselves at various coastal entrepôts. The Portuguese, who began exercising political and economic control over parts of India, particularly on the Konkan coast, transported East African slaves to India, from about 1530 to 1740. Sayf al-Mulk Miftah, the governor of Daman during the Portuguese occupation in 1530, was a Habshi chief whose force included 4,000 Habshis. In the 1730s, Indian Gujarati merchants on Mozambique Island owned a small number of slaves and a few were shipped to the Portuguese enclaves of Diu and Daman (Machado 2004).
Cultural Survivals

Whilst we are not able to paint a comprehensive picture of African migration eastwards due to its antiquity, and the lack of historical records, from travel accounts we get an idea of the tasks that Africans performed and the languages they spoke. From the ethnographic writings of Sir Richard Burton (1992), in the Sindh, we get an idea of how and why incoming Africans tried to maintain their own language. Migrants were not necessarily a homogeneous group even if they originated from a single point in Africa. A lingua franca, such as KiSwahili or Indo-Portuguese would have served as the bridging tongue (de Silva Jayasuriya 2011b).

Shidees born locally attempted to speak to the incoming slaves in an African language, which he did not identify or name. I was able to find KiSwahili equivalents to most of these words (de Silva Jayasuriya 2008). Perhaps this is not surprising, given that KiSwahili was a lingua franca in eastern Africa. KiSwahili would have served as a bridging tongue among a heterogeneous pool of African slaves. Once Africans became acculturated or assimilated, they spoke the local Asian language. Nowadays, Shidees speak Sindhi or Urdu, the local languages that they used on a daily basis.

Similarly, in India, Sidis speak Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Konkani, Telugu, Hindi and Urdu. Changes in trading patterns affect the dynamics of language.

In the process of resettling and adapting to a new homeland, Africans have lost most of their traditions and customs. But music is the most vibrant cultural survival among the diaspora. Songs also encapsulate memories of lost homelands. Indo-Portuguese songs of Diu, for example, refer to the Mozambican territory - Inhambane, Sofala, Sena, Macua – and indicate from where Africans originated (Cardoso 2010: 107).

Similarly, in Sri Lanka, a genre of song called *manha* differentiates those of African descent from other ethnic groups. Indo-Portuguese lyrics of *manhas* remind us how African migrants themselves were transformed in the process of resettling. Today, Indo-Portuguese is an endangered language and the lyrics of *manhas* encapsulate the vestiges of a once widely spoken creolised form of Portuguese.
Muslim Sidis consider themselves talented singers as Bilal, a freed African slave had been selected by Prophet Muhammed to be the first reciter of *azan* (the call to prayer). Some Sidis have found a role as spiritual healers (Basu 2003). Shrines of African Sufi saints are frequented by Hindu, Christian, Zoroastrian and Muslim alike. Devotees are not concerned with the ethnicity of the Saints or the spirit mediums through whom they simply expect to fulfil their desires or cure their illnesses. As Beheroze Shroff (2007:305) points out, Sidis who work as caretakers of shrines in Mumbai are accorded dignity and status by the Muslim, Hindu and Zoroastrian communities.

Their sacred music revolves around their ancestral Saint, Bava Gor, believed to have been an Abyssinian, who came to India several centuries ago, around the 13th century. Whilst maintaining their traditional role as *faqirs* (religious mendicants). Sidis share their Sufi joy with others. Sidi Goma, a group of Sidis from Gujarat have brought their music and dance to the world stage (Catlin-Jairazabghoy 2006).

Their performance, called *goma* (a Swahili word *ngoma*, which means ‘drum’ and also ‘dance’) or *dhamal* (in Gujarati) has been performed to audiences in Europe, America, Africa and Asia. Public performances have become an arena for embodying identity through music and dance (Catlin-Jairazabghoy 2006: 19).

With their bodies painted and dressed in animal skins and peacock headgear, the Sidi Goma perform a sacred traditional dance to the rhythm of the dhamal (small drum), madido (big drum), mugarman (footed-drum), mai mishra (coconut rattle), nafir (conch trumpet), malunga (braced musical bow) and other musical instruments.

*Urs* (the death of a Muslim Saint), celebrated over several days, provide an occasion for *dhamal*, off the stage. Sidi music and dance also was entertaining. In the noble courts, Sidi servants danced *ngoma* to the rhythms of the drums, rattles and shells on special occasions such as birthdays and weddings.

There are a significant number of Pakistanis with African ancestry. Given the strategic importance of the Makran coast in Balochistan, which was on the trade route to and from Africa, Arabia, Central Asia and South Asia, it is not surprising that African slaves also
travelled on this route. As early as the 3rd century, Omani Arabs settled on the Makran coast, becoming important slave dealers and middlemen and, feeding the South Asian demand. Toponyms such as Mombasa Street, Sheedi Village Road in Karachi, consolidate the African connection with Pakistan (Badalkhan 2006).

In northern Karachi, Fatima Bhutto (2010) describes the shrine that the Shidees protect and serve. Ancestors of the Shidees settled down on the coast of Balochistan and the shores of the Sindh from the early 7th century onwards. Their roots are believed to extend to Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya and Zanzibar.

An annual event celebrated by the small Shidees, devotees of the Sufi Saint Baba Mango Pir, attracts other ethnic groups. Girls offer specially prepared food to the crocodiles in the pond outside the shrine (http://karachi.g2gm.com/crocodiles-festival.htm).

The words of the songs that accompany the drum beats are, according to the Shidees, a mixture of Swahili and Baluchi.

The musical tradition of Shidees is closely related to maritime activities and seafaring. Makran-Baloch maritime contacts with the eastern and north-eastern African coasts lasted until the first half of the 20th century. Sailors learnt Swahili songs when they were stationed in Zanzibar and other East African ports. Elderly Shidee sailors recall how sailors from all parts of the Indian Ocean joined the drumming and dancing sessions when they were stationed in African coastal towns (Badalkhan 2006).

Musical traditions reveal the extent of acculturation and sociocultural transformation that was inevitable in the process of displacement, adaptation and resettlement. In Oman, Dieter Christensen, an ethnomusicologist, refers to the descendants of slaves who perform Lewa and play the musundu (African-type drums). The lyrics of their songs are in Swahili and Arabic and they refer to East Africa and searing. According to Sabir Badalkhan, a Pakistani folklorist, the difference between the traditions in Oman and Makran, is that the dance in Oman leads to a trance, and in Makran it is simply a festive and merry-making dance, which does not end in a trance.
In Andhra Pradesh (South India) the drum bands of the Sidis are hired to play music and to dance in ‘African ways’ on special occasions such as weddings. These musicians are called Daff Parties due to the instrument central to their performance. The Daff is a round single-headed frame drum associated with Islamic culture used in folk music, art music, dance music and Sufi rituals. In Africa, the Daff is also played by the Swahili and Swahili/Nguja people, in Dar-es-Salaam and Tabora, Tanzania. The Daff reveals the Chaush’s link with Muslim culture, and their African roots (de Silva Jayasuriya 2006: XIJ).

Whilst Afro-Asians have not been able to maintain many aspects of their cultural traditions, it is quite striking that they have been able to hold on to forms of music and dance which have also encapsulated vestiges of their languages. The rhythm-driven music of the Roman Catholic Afro-Sri Lankan community in Sirambiyadiya and their Indo-Portuguese songs, called Manhas, reverberate in my mind. Language change is inevitable but music is more resistant and the lyrics are preserving the vestiges of an endangered language. In the Indian Ocean, music is a receptacle of the cultural memories of Afro-Asians, in addition to being a vehicle for expressing identity and resistance. But music is also intertwined with religion. Moreover, it is also a form of entertainment. Above all, music is a site of tension between integration and assimilation and rings out the sounds of identity.

Call and Response, asymmetric rhythms and polyrhythms characterise this music which begins slowly, gathers momentum and increases in intensity and ends abruptly. The instruments played are a combination of ad hoc instruments and Sri Lankan drums. The melody and rhythm of the music and dance movements mark them out from the other ethnic groups. An up-beat triplet, a rhythmic figure found in East African, Ethiopian and Swahili coast music, is produced with a glass bottle and metal spoon. Metal vessels and objects beaten with wooden sticks provide a metallic sound at different pitches. Two coconut halves and a wooden chair provide an accompaniment to the music. Two types of drums – a Rabâna and a Dôlak – are played. The Rabâna is a round flat frame drum which is also played by other ethnic groups: Sinhalese, Malays and Burghers (people of European descent). The large double-headed drum called a Dolak is played by Sri Lankan Buddhists and Hindus. Various substances are used in
percussion instruments - skin, wood and metal - providing different voices. Everyone participates in the performance. Those not playing an instrument clap and mark time on the beat. The music is in 6/8 time (six quaver beats to a bar). Singing stops at the utterance of machete, a signal indicating that only the music should go on. (Machete is a small four-stringed instrument of the guitar family and is better known as Cavaquinho.) The melodies, rhythms and instruments indicate the changes that have affected the Afro-Sri Lankans. A few years ago, Ana Miseliya, the grand matriarch of this community, predicted that it is only through music and dance that their descendants would be identifiable, once their physiognomical features are diluted by out-marriage. In-marriage is rare.

Whilst the Afro-Sri Lankans trace their presence to the colonial era when the Portuguese, Dutch and British successively dominated parts or whole of the island from the 16th to the mid-20th centuries in the nearby Maldives, African slaves were brought on Arab dhows until about the mid-19th century. Baburu lava, now a popular form of music, is a reminder of the Maldives’ African connection. Africans were brought to these islands as slaves on Arab dhows. In 1834, two British naval lieutenants who visited Male, reported that “From the information we were able to collect - it appears that Muscat vessels do not often visit this place: when they do, they generally bring a cargo of slaves. Five years ago, one came and sold about twenty-five lads, at an average price of about 80 rupees each” (Forbes & Ali 1980:19). Secondly, Sultans returning from the Hajj brought back slaves who were freed on conversion. Freed slaves were absorbed into the Maldivian population which was historically accustomed to migrant settlers. Africans intermarried with the indigenous Maldivians. Most Africans worked as raveris or coconut plantation keepers, which suggests that there may have been a shortage of labour supply.

The sound of African drums is believed to have been introduced to the Maldives by African settlers and slaves. As drums are considered to be the quintessential African instrument, this is perhaps not surprising. Bodu Beru (which means ‘large drum’ in Divēhi, the Indic language of the Maldivians), is a genre of music that is associated with the Africans who came to the Maldives. Bodu Beru is played by the descendants of Sangoaru who live in
the Island of Feridu in Ari Atoll (For administrative convenience, the islands are grouped into Atolls). It is also played in other islands in this Atoll and in Felidhoo island which is in Vaavu Atoll. The drummers traditionally wore a loin cloth. Maldivians cannot understand the lyrics of the authentic songs, *Babaru Lava* (‘African songs’) that accompanied the original *Bodu Beru*. The words of these songs might be in an African language such as Swahili, but further research is necessary in order to validate this hypothesis. Nowadays the lyrics of the songs are in Dhivehi or Arabic. Spontaneous dancing by men crouched low, is spurred by the rhythms of the drums. Shoulder-shaking and head shaking prevail. Men engage in duals akin to wrestlers, which end in head-butting and cackling.

*Bodu Beru* is now commercialised and adapted for the tourists. Nowadays, a typical *Bodu Beru* group has three drummers, a lead singer and a chorus of ten to fifteen men. Most songs begin slowly and increase in tempo. A few men from the group break into unchoreographed dancing, flinging their arms and legs, and swaying to the beat as the music reaches a crescendo. *Bodu Beru* is the most popular form of music in the Maldives and is popular among both young and old, females and males alike. The themes of *Babaru Lava* vary from love to religion, rich versus poor, enjoyment, courage or praise of the Sultan. *Babaru nisun* (‘African dance’) is performed to the beat of the *Bodu Beru* and singing of *lava*. The dancers sway from side to side and the Divehis (means ‘the islanders’ and is a name for the Maldivians), who are of non-African origin, blacken themselves to perform the dance. The drums are two and a half feet long and made out of breadfruit or coconut wood with a goatskin membrane on each end.

The legends and historical facts on African movement to South Asia, indicate that the ancestors of today’s Afro-Asians were soldiers, traders, slaves or mendicants. Change is inevitable and over the centuries some Afro-Asians have assimilated. Acculturation is faster with religious conversions.

Some Africans had a high profile in India from the 14th to the 20th centuries. But today most Sidis live on the margins. Many have been affected by the political dynamics from which their employees or owners were affected. In Saurashtra (Gujarat state) and Yellapur
(Karnataka state), Sidis, however, have been accorded Scheduled Tribe status. This status enables them to benefit from the Indian government’s affirmative action schemes available to those recognised as socially and economically marginalised. Other Sidis now deliberate as to why they have not been accorded this status.

In Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), where the number of Sidis are small, they are considered an Other Backward Class (Llewellyn-Jones 2011). Sidis generally consider themselves a jati or jamat (caste). Basu (1993) states that the Sidis in Gujarat are mainly descendants of slaves who were without caste, affiliation, ancestry, or family, but were integrated into a caste of black people by mediation of fakirs. Their role of fakirs is based on their bond to the shrine of Bava Gor. Fictive kinship ties provided the Sidis with a social identity, needed for establishing marital relations. Runaway and freed slaves who went to Bava Gor’s Shrine (dargah) in Gujarat felt the need to recreate a community based on their African roots.

With improved communication networks Afro-Asians are becoming more aware of their ethnic origins and cultural roots. Sidis have their own youth organisations such as Ratanpur Yuvak, Mandal, Vadava Sidi Yuvak Mandal, Sidi Rastriya Yuvak Mandal. There are also several Sidi societies and groups in India today - Sidi Development Society and Sidi Sanskriti Kala Mandd in Yellapur, the Sidi Goma Al-Mumbrik Charitable Trust and Sidi Goma Group in Gujarat and the Arabi Daff Party in Andhra Pradesh – all which help to consolidate an identity based on a shared ethnic origin and common cultural heritage.

Concluding Remarks

Waves of African migrations, over land and across the oceans, were propelled by commercial and socio-religious factors. Africans experienced different religious practices and were converted to Islam or Christianity. They could not maintain African dialects and learnt the local Asian language or a lingua franca (a second language which enables people who do not speak each other’s mother-tongue to communicate).

Though not all Afro-Asians are descendants of forced migrants, many Africans were not able to carry their tangible belongings with them. Music may have consoled the forced
migrants, and helped them to recreate an imagined homeland. Music may also have been a way of keeping in touch with their homelands, to which they could not return.

Some forms of Afro-Asian music are linked to socio-religious activities while others have become forms of entertainment. They are vehicles for Afro-Asians to express their identity. They are a reservoir of cultural memory. Afro-Asian music has survived long-distance migration, the slave trade, colonisation, post-independent rule and processes of assimilation and integration.

Social mobility, out-marriage and religious conversion were also catalysts in the process of assimilation which made Africans invisible in South Asia. Yet, there are a significant number of South Asians who identify themselves with Africa. Their physiognomy may not always fit into a stereotypical African phenotype. Out-marriage and acculturation have contributed to a wider range of features the loss or dilution of African physiognomy and characteristics. Identity is a complex issue – dynamic and multi-faceted.

Afro-Asians are small powerless minorities today or have assimilated with the other ethnic groups in Asia. Afro-Asian culture has not been adequately represented. Music, nevertheless, empowers them and gives Afro-Asians giving them a voice. It rings out their identity and brings their roots to the fore.

When all other cultural elements are transformed, forced African migrants, cling on to their music and dance forms. Their history is embodied in the dance movements and the sound of their music.

Bibliography


