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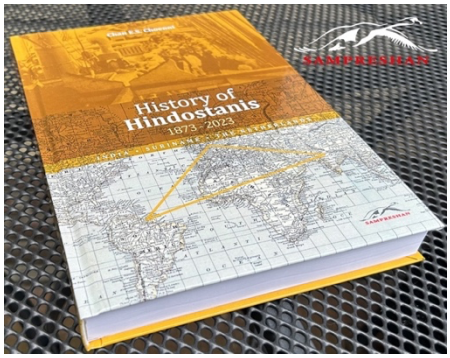


## *History of Hindostanis 1873-2023*

***India • Suriname • The Netherlands***

by Dr. Chan E.S. Choenni

*History of Hindostanis* describes and analyzes the fascinating history of British-Indian indentured labourers who emigrated to the former Dutch colony of Suriname in South America, and their descendants.

Following the abolition of slavery, the Dutch government entered into an agreement with the British government in 1870 for the recruitment of labourers in British India and their transportation to Suriname to work on plantations under five-year contracts. Under this indentured labour system, 34,304 Indians emigrated to Suriname between 1873 and 1916.

Approximately one-third of these labourers returned to India after fulfilling their contracts. The majority, however, settled in Suriname, mostly as small farmers. They and their descendants, known as Hindostanis, played a crucial role in sustaining the agricultural economy of the Dutch colony. Their population grew, and by 1970 they had become the largest ethnic group in multi-ethnic Suriname.

A century after the first Indian immigrants arrived, a second wave of migration occurred around the time of Suriname's independence in 1975. Many Hindostanis left for the Netherlands, as they had been politically marginalized despite being the largest ethnic group. Today, there are more Hindostanis in the Netherlands (approximately 180,000) than in Suriname (approximately 170,000), where they remain the largest ethnic group. Hindostanis have largely preserved their Indian culture and language and have, over time, become a relatively affluent community.

In this book, Chan Choenni explains how and why the history of Hindostanis differs from that of the descendants of British-Indian indentured labourers in other countries. Born in Suriname and residing in the Netherlands, Choenni is a former Professor of Hindostani Migration at the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) Amsterdam. Previously, as a government policy adviser, he was extensively involved in integration policy issues in the Netherlands.

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**Chan E.S. Choenni | Sampreshan: Zoetermeer 2025 | ISBN 9789083345178 | hardcover (POD) | illustrations | pp. 378 | only available at SAMPRESHAN.COM The Netherlands**

***How to order from abroad?*** *The price of the hardcover (POD) edition is € 45 (shipping costs excluded). You can order* History of Hindostanis *by sending an e-mail to info@sampreshan.com. You will receive an invoice including shipping costs, and once payment is received, your order will be shipped via PostNL.*

Read more on the infosite Hindorama: https://www.hindorama.com/new-publication-makes-history-of-hindostanis-accessible-to-global-audience-hr-sampreshan/

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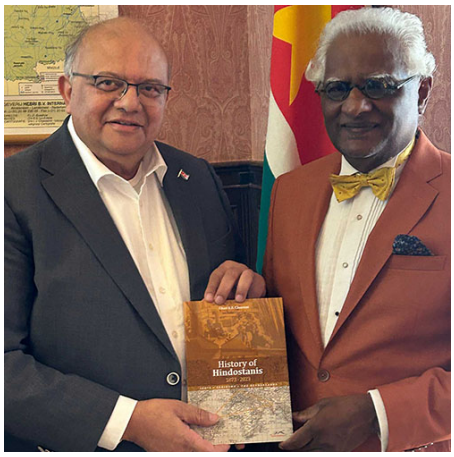

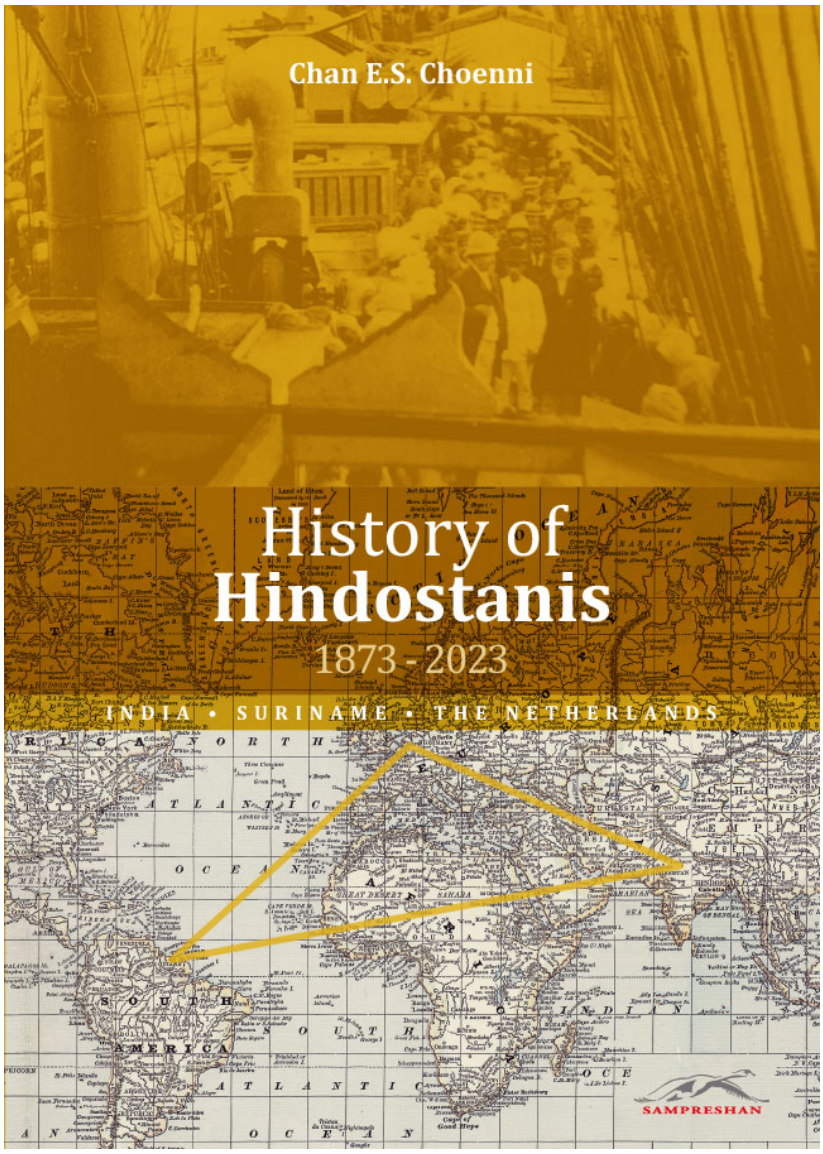
*Dr. Chan Choenni presented his book History of Hindostanis 1873–2023 to the Ambassador of Suriname, Rajendre Khargi [The Hague, 30 April 2025]*