

JHB. Indian Social Welfare
Annual Report
1934-1935 -

JOHANNESBURG INDIAN SOCIAL WELFARE ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT
1934 -- 1935

HISTORY

Early in June 1934 the Indo-European Women's Association wrote to the Institute of Race Relations drawing attention to the extreme poverty and distress which existed among the poorer sections of the Indian community in Johannesburg.

Investigations carried out by the Women's Association showed that, though some families were receiving assistance from the Rand Aid Association and the Children's Aid Society, only the fringe of the problem was being touched. It was recognised too that, with the approach of the winter months, conditions would be aggravated, and it was essential for immediate steps to be taken to deal with the position.

The need for a permanent organisation was recognised by the Indo-European Women's Association, and the Institute of Race Relations was asked to convene a meeting of those interested.

On June 11th a meeting was held of representatives of the Indo-European Council, the Indo-European Women's Association, the Indian Commercial Association, the Transvaal Indian Women's Association and the Institute of Race Relations. There were also present a number of individuals in a personal capacity.

The meeting was divided as to the steps which should be taken to deal with relief work. A strong body of opinion held that the Indo-European Council could well do all that was necessary in regard to the raising of funds and that the distribution of food and the investigating of cases could be carried on by the Women's Association. On the other hand, it was felt that something more permanent and comprehensive was needed, in that much of the distress prevailing was due to unemployment and that steps would have to be taken to provide something in the nature of an employment bureau for Indian juveniles.

Eventually it was agreed to form a special organisation to be called the Johannesburg Indian Social Welfare Association, with the object "to assist impoverished members of the Indian community in Johannesburg through charitable aid and other means".

A constitution was drawn up and early in August 1934 the Association was registered as a charitable institution under the Charitable Institutions (Control) Ordinance of 1926.

ADMINISTRATION

The work of the Association is controlled by the Association which elects an executive to carry out the details of administration.

The first Executive consisted of the following:-

Mr. H. Kallenbach - Chairman	
Mr. M. Mia	} Vice-Chairmen.
Mrs. R.F.A. Hoernle	
Mr. A.L. Saffery - Honorary Secretary	
Mr. Rheinallt Jones	} Honorary Treasurers
Mr. Gardee	
Khan Bahadu Hajee Cassim Adam	
Mr. Asherbhai	
Mr. Coovadia	
Mr. W. Ernest	
Miss Francis	
Mrs. Kuper	
Mr. S.M. Nana	
Mr. P.K. Naidoo	
Mr. Nursoo	
Mr. B.K. Patel	
Mrs. Singh.	

The Agent General for India, Syed Sir Raza Ali was elected Honorary President of the Association at a later date.

FINANCE

One of the first difficulties the Association had to face was the raising of funds to carry out adequately the extensive relief work which was required.

It was recognised that at least £500 per annum would be required and steps were immediately taken to raise this amount. Through the kind offices of the Indian Agent, Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh, a meeting of influential Indians was held at the residence of Khan Bahadu Hajee Cassim Adam and a substantial sum of money was promised. The Mohammedan community guaranteed £350 and the Hindu community £150. At a later date £100 was received from an anonymous source, but it was understood that this amount was to be ear-marked for a special purpose, viz. the fitting of a house to be used as a clinic.

WELFARE WORK

In January 1935 the Association appointed Miss E. Katz, a trained welfare worker with considerable experience in Germany, to undertake and supervise general welfare work on behalf of the Association. Miss Katz's duties are four-fold. She investigates all cases which she hears are in need of relief. If, after investigation, she considers the family cannot support itself and needs relief, she recommends the family to the Rand Aid Association, which supplies the family with rations. Thereafter, Miss Katz keeps in touch with the family, and, if after a period, she finds that the members no longer require relief, she notifies the Rand Aid accordingly.

Miss Katz also regularly visits homes where there is sickness. She dresses wounds and advises in cases of illness where nursing and careful treatment are required. This part of her work occupies a good deal of time, as a very wide area has to be covered. Fortunately the Association, through funds raised by the Kunwarani from the Indian community, has been able to provide Miss Katz with a small car, which is maintained by the Association.

- Miss -

Miss Katz controls the Association's clinic,, which will be described later. She is always present when the doctors are in attendance and she follows up all cases which are attended to at the clinic.

Miss Katz acts as the link between this Association and other social welfare agencies in the town, to see that the Indian community is properly represented at general community functions, e.g. International Red Cross Rally; Rose Day; Health Week; Mothers and Babies Day, etc. In this capacity she also represents this Association on the Non-European Committee of the Children's Aid Society.

THE CLINIC

The Association hires a house in Lilian Road, Fordsburg, which is used as a clinic under the supervision of qualified doctors. The following doctors have very kindly been doing honorary work for the Association:- Dr. C. Adler, who attends on Fridays; Dr. C.G. Booker, who attends on Mondays; Dr. Marion Thompson, who attends on Wednesdays. The Association is sincerely grateful to these doctors for their kind services.

On Tuesday rations are distributed from the clinic and on Thursday the Municipality uses the clinic for health work among mothers and babies.

The Municipality is willing to start an ante-natal clinic for Indian women provided proper clinic accommodation can be offered for this purpose. The present accommodation is quite inadequate for this work and it will be one of the urgent tasks for the coming year to get the clinic into proper quarters and to get the Association with the Municipality on to a proper footing.

RELIEF WORK

It has been stated that the welfare worker refers all genuine cases of need to the Rand Aid Association. This Association donates £150 annually to the Rand Aid Association which sum, though by no means covering the cost of relief given by the Rand Aid Association, is a gesture of this Association's willingness to help.

In addition to the rations supplied by the Rand Aid, the welfare worker often has to distribute clothes and blankets in cases of need, and supply rations to families who have been resident in Johannesburg for less than two years and hence cannot be helped by the Rand Aid Association. The Association is indebted to the Indo-European Women's Association for a monthly donation of £5, which is used for these purposes.

The Association has also helped to pay the rent of two families which would have been turned out of their homes had this not been done.

EDUCATION

Among the more general activities of the Association can be classed the promotion of better educational facilities for Indians.

As a direct result of the efforts of members of the Association and particularly through the efforts of Mrs. Hoernlé, one of the Association's Vice-Chairmen, a school for Indian girls is to be opened in January. The Transvaal Education Department has taken full responsibility for staffing and running the school.

OLD AGE PENSIONS

The Association was impressed by the need for the provision of old age pensions for Indians, and the matter was taken up on several occasions. The Association co-operated with and supported the Indian Congress in its efforts to have this unsatisfactory position rectified, and when Congress prepared a memorandum for submission to the Minister of the Interior, this was endorsed and a letter written to the Minister supporting Congress.

Subsequently the Indian Congress sent a deputation to the Minister, as a direct result of which the Minister promised to set aside a sum of money for each of the four Provinces for the relief of indigent Indians.

JUVENILE UNEMPLOYMENT

The problem of Juvenile unemployment is one which will have to be tackled seriously within the near future. Unfortunately, up to now the arrangements in connection with the establishment of the clinic have compelled the Association to neglect this serious question and one which is vitally connected with the Association's activities. Now, however, that the clinic is firmly established it is hoped that an early start will be made to deal with the unemployment question.

NON-EUROPEAN BLIND

The Association has taken great interest in the activities of the recently formed Non-European Blind Committee and our thanks are due to Mrs. Kuper for the active part she has played in this connection.

PROPAGANDA FOR COMING YEAR

In addition to carrying on our established obligations, it is essential that in the immediate future steps should be taken to get more adequate accommodation for the clinic, either through building or renting, and in either case funds will be necessary for proper equipment. We hope to make the clinic a centre for the treatment of Venereal Diseases in co-operation with the Government.

Further, in the coming year a thorough survey of the avenues of employment for Indians should be undertaken and measures resolved on to end the very unsatisfactory position in Johannesburg at present. This is a large task in itself and, thirdly, the facilities for proper recreation and the use of leisure for both sexes needs urgent investigation and remedy.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh and Lady Singh. We wish specially to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Kunwar and Kunwarani for their generous help throughout the early stages of the Association's history. They not only donated liberal sums of money, but assisted in the collection of the funds necessary successfully to carry on the work of the Association.

The Muslim Association. We are grateful to the Muslim Association which has helped us in many ways, but particularly by placing its office at the disposal of the Association for the monthly meetings.

Mrs. R.F.A. Hoernlé. Finally, we must acknowledge a special debt to Mrs. Hoernlé for her untiring efforts on behalf of the Association. As President of the Indo-European Women's Association it was she who first urged the formation of an organisation for dealing with distress among Indians, and it can truly be said that it has been mainly through Mrs. Hoernlé's efforts that the Association has reached the flourishing state in which it now is.

A. Lynn Saffery

HONORARY SECRETARY

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