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RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNUTTERABLE EXPERIENCE AND MEMORY: NARRATIVES OF BEING AND BELONGING OF THE GIRMITIYAS OF NORTH-INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The narratives of indentured labourers from India are not just their memoirs of pain, anguish, trauma, and betrayal; they are also their accounts of courage, belongingness to their roots, and rage against Western imperialism. This representation of the Girmitiyas has not found enough space in academia, and their connection to literature has been marginal. Therefore, the paper attempts to analyze the available accounts of their experiences and memories as Girmitiyas documented by the Girit Organization. This paper is an attempt to trace the representation of Girmitiya in literature and their experience, culture, identity, and trauma caused by the forced immigration and torture at the hands of whites in the name of agreement. It also evaluates the collective consciousness of the indentured labourers and their belonging to their homeland. For the study, the paper considers the narratives of the Girimitiyas available on the website of Giritiya. These narratives are the recollections of their experiences during the Girit, the corrupted word for 'Agreement'. The paper relies on the post-colonial discourse of being and belonging.

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INTRODUCTION

The term 'Girit' is derived from the mispronunciation of the word 'agreement,' reflecting upon the more graded rendition of the labourers who were forced to work for the Britishers in their different colonies under the forced contracts (Amin). 'Giritiya' refers to the descendants of Indian indentured labourers who were brought to various British colonies, such as Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, and others, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Pande 2). The system of contractual or indenture labour was introduced by the colonizers against the forced labour or slavery (Hedge and Sahoo 2018). The Girmitiyas from North India embarked on a journey marked by unutterable experiences, enduring trauma, and crafting narratives that illuminate the intricacies of their being and belonging (Amin). Shreya Katyayani in her paper titled "Exploring the Role of Testimonio Method in Shaping Collective Memory of Indenture History: From Empathy to Empowerment" writes that the 'testimonio method' which is centered on the personal and collective memory helps the to understand the intricacies of lived experience of the Girmitiyas and their descendants (1). Their experiences with migration, displacement, and identity building are intricate and multidimensional.

The economic challenges they faced back home; poverty, unemployment, unfavorable agricultural conditions, were the main motivators for many Girmitiyas. Their decision to make the treacherous trek was prompted by the prospect of greater pay and living conditions in the colonies. The historical backdrop of British colonial policies, as well as the challenges posed by North India's economy, forced many people to embark on an indescribable adventure. Throughout their journey, the Girmitiya family from North India endured unspeakable pain. The indescribable sensations of adversity, including the severe labour environments, family divisions, and the mental burden of relocation, provide a quiet background to their survival stories. It is noteworthy that North India, specifically areas like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, played a major role as sources of indentured labour, even though the majority of Girmitiyas were transported from the Indian subcontinent to different British colonies, such as Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, and others. The experiences of migration, displacement, and identity creation in foreign environments are fundamental to the stories of identification and belonging told by the Girmitiyas of North India. The Girmitiya journey commenced with the stamp of trauma – indenture. This paper explores the unspoken sorrows of the indentured labourers, examining the harsh conditions, exploitative practices, and the pervasive trauma that became an indelible part of their shared history. The narrative of

Girmitiya is woven with threads of trauma, memories etched in pain, and a shared identity forged amidst the crucible of betrayal. This paper delves into the intricate tapestry of the Girmitiya experience, unraveling the layers of trauma, the persistence of memory, and the profound sense of shared identity tainted by the shadows of betrayal. Trauma reverberates throughout generations and is frequently kept silent. Therefore, the paper explores the inexpressible effects on Girmitiyas' descendants, illuminating the unsaid difficulties that succeeding generations encounter in resolving conflicting identities and confronting the unsaid inter-generational trauma. Resilient but burdened, memory is a key character in the Girmitiya story. This paper explores oral histories, the importance of remembering, and the difficulties in maintaining memories for future generations. It draws attention to the way memory serves as a conduit for the collective memory of trauma and resiliency. Girmitiya communities turned to their shared identities for comfort when faced with adversity. They maintained their identity of language religious rituals, and customs in order to create a shared identity in the face of exile.

The experiences of Girmitiyas involve a complex mix of historical, social, and cultural factors, and many carry the trauma of their ancestors' indenture. All the girmitiyas faced a forced migration from the native lands and were transported to the lands which were unknown to them, often forced to live in measurable conditions. The forced migration and tortured life often lead them to traumatic life conditions causing psychological sufferings. According to Mangru, "the plantation system was designed primarily to humiliate and subjugate workers to the will of the planters and to create a sense of helplessness and dependence similar to slavery" (qtd. in Giri 168). There are several first hand stories in which the descendant/indentured labourers have shared their memories of torture, enforcement, starvation and their daily lives on the lands where they were transported during the colonial period. Their tales were shaped by recollections, sometimes unsaid but deeply felt. Their shared experiences and the challenges of recounting the unimaginable offer an insight into how oral histories evolved as a way of transmitting memories that remained unsaid. These stories are reminiscent of their forced migration, often separated from their families and familiar surroundings. As Shahid Amin writes that "it is a sense of place that sublimates the girmitiyas", this displacement and separation from their roots can lead to trauma which they have shared through their personal narratives.

Brij V. Lal in his book *Girmitiyas: The Making of their Memory-Keeper from the Indian Indentured Diaspora* writes that these indentured labourers from colonial India have been the victims of the systematic caste system, famine, poverty and starvation in their own homeland which caused them to sign the oppressive agreement before they started their arduous journey. Not only this but Lal has also talked about that how their experiences have not found space in the literature and, hence, left unnoticed and unacknowledged. Vinay Lal in "Indian Servitude in the British Empire" writes that "scarcely any attention was paid to the conditions that would prompt several million Indians, who were predominantly illiterates from lower and lower middle caste communities, to migrate to distant lands of whose very existence they would have known little or nothing..." (19).

The scenario of their ignorance from both the history and literary world has started changing. In the recent decades, the writers have started talking about their suffering and tortured life in different countries, like; Fiji, Surname, Mauritius, Natal, Guyana, Trinidad, Tobago, etc. Their experiences have been recorded through mostly their oral narratives since most of the Girmitiyas were illiterate. In recent years, there is a huge focus shifting from the imperial discourses and the first world literature to the lived experiences, struggles, trauma and hopes through the personal narratives. These personal narratives play a crucial role in preserving the history and experiences of Girmitiyas (Kumar and Kumar 3). Oral histories passed down through generations help in understanding the lived experiences, challenges, and triumphs of individuals and communities. Some Girmitiyas or their descendants express their experiences through literature, art, and other creative mediums. These personal narratives contribute to a broader understanding of the impact of indenture on individuals and communities. The stories of the girmitiyas; like Bhujwan, Devi Singh, Chinsam, Din Mohammed, Gafur, Gayadin, Govind Singh, Hussein, Jagan, Lakhpat Singh, Lotan. etc are the first hand narratives collected from the Girmitiya organization's website. Their stories have been collected and translated for the purpose of wide readership. These individuals have themselves experienced torture, harassment, bullying, and trauma. The working conditions for these transported labourers were often harsh and exploitative. Long hours, meager wages, and mistreatment contributed to physical and psychological trauma.

The personal narratives of the Girmitiyas are the testimony of the cruel British imperialism and their brutal treatment of the labourers who were misguided and forced to sign the agreement. To export the labourers, the British government set the depots in Calcutta and Bombay. The indentured labourers were the people who were either fed of their familial conditions, or had no hope of earning in India. The lack of working opportunity forced them to find the works wherever was it available so that they could serve their families. A story of Bhageleu, an indentured labourer, collected from the website of the Girmitiya organization tells the distressful condition in India during 1910s which forced him to accept a job wherever he could find. He shares his experiences which were recorded by the organization. Bhageleu says, "I left India because it was a time of distress in the country. There was, therefore, a willingness on my part to accept the offer of a job. I was told I would be provided with food and a home as well" (Girmitiya.org). Lotan, one of the girmitiyas, recalls the reason behind leaving India, "I came from Basti when I was 28 years old. I left India because there was a shortage of work there..." (Girmitiya.org). Girmitiyas' narratives are often embedded in oral traditions, folklore, and storytelling. These cultural expressions serve as powerful mediums for the preservation and transmission of their experiences. Some descendants of Girmitiyas contribute to literature, art, and cultural events that reflect on their shared history and contribute to a broader understanding of being and belonging. Hemanshi Kumar, one of the first generation descendants and whose ancestors worked on sugarcane plantations in Fiji, shares the expectation of her parents before leaving their in the hope that they would find some good works for them and their family on a land which they had hear about having good works which would fulfill their family expectations. In her an interview with Aanchal Malhotra, she talks about the nature of

work that her ancestors had in Fiji, “it wasn’t meant to be permanent; my great-great grandparents were assured that they could come back... each labourer was made to sign a contract, upon which an Emigration Pass would be issued” (Malhotra 2018). The forced migration of the Indian labourers has not only brought the cultural shift and identity crisis but also it has caused severe mental illness and generational trauma. The memory of the brutal treatment and tortured experiences has changed the life condition of those who experienced torture and suffering at first hand; it has also impacted the lives their family members. Girmitiyas faced the challenge of preserving their cultural identity while adapting to new environments. The loss of cultural practices, language, and traditions has been a major source of trauma and impact one's sense of identity. Trauma experienced by the Girmitiyas has been transmitted across generations; from the labourers to their descendants contributing to a collective or intergenerational trauma. Over time, Girmitiyas developed unique cultural hybridity, blending elements of their Indian heritage with the cultures of their adopted countries. This process has been both enriching and challenging, creating a complex narrative of identity.

Driven by causes including poverty, landlessness, and British colonial policy, Girmitiyas from North India abandoned their homelands in quest of economic possibilities. Their tales began with the difficult voyage across seas, sometimes on cramped and miserable ships. It was this travel that tore apart their sense of place and identity. Girmitiyas had hard labour on plantations when they arrived in distant places. Their stories frequently describe the difficulties they had adjusting to a new setting, weather, and work schedule. Girmitiyas showed flexibility and perseverance in the face of adversity. Their stories show how people overcame hardship, formed communities, and preserved cultural customs in foreign lands. The Girmitiyas made an effort to maintain the language, customs, and religious observances of their North Indian civilization. The stories highlight how crucial it is to preserve cultural connections in order to preserve one's sense of self. Girmitiyas in North India created hybrid identities throughout time, fusing aspects of their native North India with the customs of their new homeland. The intricacies of belonging to several cultural domains are examined in these stories. The girmitiya personal tales discuss the recruiting process, which was frequently characterized by deceit, force, or incomplete comprehension. Agents would minimize the difficulties and sufferings labourers would experience overseas in order to lure them in with promises of money and a return after a certain amount of time.

During the indenture period, many Girmitiyas were separated from their families, friends, and communities. This isolation further heightened feelings of displacement as they navigated the challenges of their new lives in foreign lands. Upon arrival in the colonies, Girmitiyas faced a radical shift in environment, climate, and culture which became one of the reasons of their trauma. The abrupt transition from familiar surroundings to the unfamiliar landscapes of the plantations was disorienting and contributed to a sense of displacement and crisis of identity. The conditions on the plantations were often harsh, with long working hours, meager wages, and limited personal freedom. The contrast between the expectations set during recruitment and the reality of plantation life intensified the sense of displacement.

Bhujwan in his experience talks about the harsh working conditions in Fiji and the cruel behavior overseers. He talks about the clash between the labourers and the overseers due to the partial and harsh behavior of the sardars and overseers. He says, “While some sardars were bad the overseers were pretty bad as well. Sardars lived in the same lines but they had better accommodation, instead of one room they sometimes had two or three. There used to be a lot of strife and sometimes overseers were assaulted. Both men and women hit overseers” (Girmitiya.org). The narratives of Girmitiyas often involve the transmission of values, stories, and cultural practices across generations. This passing down of heritage becomes a crucial aspect of their being and belonging. The descendants of Girmitiyas may grapple with questions of identity and belonging in both their ancestral homeland and the diasporic communities. Narratives of subsequent generations shed light on these ongoing challenges of home as Marya writes in her paper “Girmitiya Diaries: Intergenerational Trauma, Memory and Belonging in Brij Lal’s *The Tamarind Tree*”, “Personal memory was tied to the political and social community. Home had evolved into a phrase for the labourers to which no specific meaning could be attached. Perhaps even that image is a dream image, a complex term altered by each succeeding generation that has dreamt it” (60).

For the North Indian Girmitiyas, memory was a crucial factor in forming their personal histories. Their Memory looks into how stories are carried down orally and how memories of being uprooted are maintained and handed down through the generations. It also takes into account how difficult it is to keep narratives accurate throughout time. Girmitiyas' personal narratives were significantly shaped by their memories (Katyayani 6). The oral traditions became a vehicle for the preservation of the communal memory of relocation through the transmission of stories. However, the passage of time introduced challenges, raising questions about the accuracy and fidelity of these memories over generations. Girmitiyas had to balance preserving their cultural legacy with adapting to their new environment, which was a challenging undertaking. In order to embrace the cultural influences of their adopted country while preserving linguistic, religious, and traditional elements from North India, they had to modify their approach. Despite all this hardship, the Girmitiyas were anxious to maintain some of their North Indian traditions. Girmitiyas' stories examine the ways in which language, religious rites, and other cultural aspects are preserved while also examining the cultural modifications that developed in diasporic society (Kaur and Prasad 147). The tension between preservation and integration led to the complicated construction of their identities.

Physical and psychological trauma shaped the lives of succeeding generations, even beyond Girmitiyas' direct experiences. This investigates the ways in which generational trauma materialized and looks at the continuous difficulties that the descendants of North Indian Girmitiyas have in resolving intergenerational trauma and managing their identities. Literature and art are two ways that North Indian Girmitiyas convey their trauma and personal stories. It explores certain instances of their imaginative representation of their experiences. These creative and literary pursuits function as both cathartic releases and means of conserving and disseminating their past to a larger public.

Trauma, both physical and psychological, became a legacy passed down through generations grappling with the enduring impact of displacement (Marya 59). The challenges faced by subsequent generations in navigating dual identities and addressing intergenerational trauma are critical components of their evolving narratives. Brij VLal uses the tamarind tree as a metaphor to address the problem of home and belonging and to emphasize the emptiness that results from crossing the Kala Pani (Black rivers). The notion of passing over and the contaminated self are used to examine Kala Pani's existence. Kala Pani turns becomes a representation of the rupture that opens the door for transgression and separates us from an ordered society (Marya 59). Girmitiyas endured long hours, little pay, and harassment while labouring in difficult conditions on plantations. The severe physical and psychological stress that accompanied their labour can be examined in their personal narratives which were entangled in a complicated web of difficulties that exacerbated their suffering when they were separated from their families (Kumar, *From India to Fiji*).

North Indian Girmitiyas endured a variety of horrific events when they were indentured. The loss of loved ones and familiar surroundings added to the trauma, inflicting permanent wounds on their collective memories. The trauma and individual stories of North Indian Girmitiyas paint a complex picture of their path of uprooting, resiliency, and identity formation. Their trauma-shaped and generationally passed tales add to a deeper comprehension of the nuances of diasporic lives. It is imperative that we respect the tenacity of North Indian Girmitiyas, accept the effects of trauma, and appreciate the continuous efforts made by the diaspora to recover their past and promote a sense of identity as we consider their stories. The stories of their individual experiences remain a crucial component of the greater fabric of the Indian diaspora, interlacing tales of perseverance, adjustment, and cultural persistence. Girmitiyas's path was rife with psychological and bodily pain. The Girmitiyas' collective psyche was permanently altered by the terrible events, which influenced the stories they would tell future generations (Archary 2).

The Girmitiyas' experiences were transmitted and preserved mostly via memory. The importance of oral traditions and storytelling as means of transmitting memories of displacement is examined in this research. It also explores the difficulties of preserving story integrity throughout time and the influence of changing viewpoints on societal memory. Girmitiyas' direct experiences were not the only ones affected by trauma; it had a lasting impression on later generations as their descendants are still coping with the effects of their relocation. It addresses intergenerational trauma and the difficulties that subsequent generations encounter in resolving conflicting identities. Girmitiyas's personal narratives are a tapestry weaved with memories, pain, and identity. Their transition from indentured servants to diasporic groups is evidence of their tenacity and cultural persistence. Honoring the complexity of their tales, recognizing the trauma they experienced, and applauding the continued efforts made by the diaspora to reclaim their heritage are essential as we think back on their experiences (Amin). The life stories of the Girmitiyas are a monument to the resilient spirit of a people who created their identity in the face of hardship. Girmitiyas and their descendants' literary and cultural creations poignantly convey the anguish and memories of migration.

These creative endeavors promote awareness and a greater comprehension of the Girmitiya journey in addition to acting as channels for individual catharsis. Girmitiya migration was prompted by the historical background of British colonial practices as well as economic hardships in places like North India. The relocation was forced by the economic pressures that forced people to migrate abroad. It was difficult for the Girmitiyas to balance maintaining their cultural heritage with adjusting to their new surroundings. Their language, religious customs, and cultural heritage are all testaments to their identity, as told through their stories (Kumar, *From India to Fiji*). A significant number of hybrid identities emerged in the foreign nation as Girmitiyas negotiated the challenges of cultural adaptation. One of the journey's key features was their battle to preserve their culture in the face of indescribable obstacles. They managed to live by quietly navigating the modifications necessary for existence in distant areas while maintaining the North Indian culture, language, and traditions.

Girmitiyas, who were labourers with similar language and cultural origins, typically created close-knit communities with one another. Both Hindus and Muslims lived together irrespective of their differences in religious practices. Lotan, a girmitiya, shares his experience, "Hindus and Muslims were all friends. Muslims used to invite Hindus to their Koran readings and Hindus reciprocated when they did likewise. In those days there were no cattle slaughtered. It was only when people became 'free' that they resorted to killing cattle. Hindus and Muslims used to live like brothers on the same estate" (Girmitiya.org). These groups were vital for intercultural dialogue, mutual support, and the building of a shared identity in the face of hardship. Both the Muslims and Hindus share their cultural practices with each other. Debi Singh tells in his personal experience as an indentured labour, "Muslims did not get involved with throwing paint in the Holi festival but they went to the Ramayan readings. They had their own Koran reading to which they invited Hindus. During their Eid festivals Muslims took the view that nobody invited anyone and all were welcome to come and eat at their place. At Muslim weddings Hindus and Muslims all ate together" (Girmitiya.org).

They engaged in cultural adaptations, incorporating elements of the local culture into their own practices. One such story of one of the Girmitiyas, Bhujwan from Gonda, a city in Uttar Pradesh talks about the Indian festivals celebrated at the land of Fiji. He writes, "During indenture days people used to take part in festivals like Holi and Tazia, in the reading of Ramayana and in singing and dancing. Everyone whether Hindu or Muslim took part in the tazia. Every estate used to build a tazia and then they all used to converge towards one place. The tazia was a decorated-paper edifice. In the procession people used to play music" (Girmitiya.org). This process of syncretism and blending of cultural elements contributed to the formation of unique diasporic identities of Girmitiyas and their descendants.

Girmitiya descendants frequently struggle to reconcile their Indian ancestry with the cultural influences of their diasporic societies. Generation to generation, the process of constructing one's identity is dynamic and continuous. Girmitiyas attempted to maintain certain aspects of their cultural identity in spite of the difficulties. This includes preserving the customs, language, and religion of their home countries.

These customs became essential to the way their identity was formed (Hermann and Fuhse 20). Despite being marginalized in historical accounts, Girmitiya women were integral to the indenture experience. As essential members of the Indian indentured labourer diaspora throughout history, Girmitiya women provide a distinct viewpoint to stories about trauma, identity, belonging, and memory. Their stories explore how the personal narratives of Girmitiya women capture the intricacies of trauma, the need for belonging, and memory retention by delving into their varied experiences. Indian women came up with creative ways to deal with the situation as it was, and they frequently succeeded in making the bad things work to their benefit. They effectively used the transitional spaces to create new identities for themselves, gaining empowerment from their knowledge. In addition, they provided a strong foundation for future generations by raising families in frequently unwelcoming environments (Pande v). Amba Pande in the preface of her book *Indentured and Post-Indentured Experiences of Women in the Indian Diaspora* writes about the contributions of women:

Negotiating their way through Indian cultural traditions dominated by patriarchal norms and indentured lives at plantations they were able to recast their mesogenic stigmatization and make a critical contribution in social, cultural, economic and political formation of the fledgling settlements which transformed into dynamic societies over succeeding generations. In so doing they subverted/transformed several established paradigms and categorizations. (v)

Girmitiya women had particular difficulties, including as heavy work loads, obstacles peculiar to their gender, and cultural disruption. Their experiences of inter-connectedness illuminate the complex character of their pain. The tales of Girmitiya women became centered around the pursuit of 'being' and 'belonging'. In order to address issues of cultural preservation, assimilation, and the creation of a sense of belonging within diasporic communities, these women experienced how people navigated their identities in other nations (Pande 9).

Understanding Girmitiya women's role as a dynamic force in memory preservation is crucial for comprehending their cultural expression and resiliency. They actively negotiate ways to maintain customs, languages, and behaviors, fostering identity formation and belonging negotiation. They not only negotiated the ways to preserve their culture and customs, but these women also resisted against the Europeans to stop physical and sexual assaults against them. The experiences of Pahalad, a Girmitiya, on the indentured, are one such instance of women's fight against their mistreatment. He described the attacks on women he had witnessed and the resistance they had shown:

There was an overseer who told an Indian woman that he wanted her. She asked him to wait till the next day. This woman, with two other women, devised a plan. When he came the next day, two of the women remained at a distance. When he approached the one he had spoken to the previous day, she asked him to take off all clothes: when he lifted his shirt to take it off all three women jumped on him and beat him up and threw him into a drain. There were no consequences for the women. (Girmitiya.org)

Girmitiya women and their descendants face persistent issues due to trauma and memory that have been passed down through the centuries. Although the Indian public had long been aware of the miserable conditions faced by Indian labourers working abroad, what most infuriated them was the news of the harassment and abuse of Indian women on plantations (Kumar, *Indentured Labourers: Women*). Two Fiji Indian women, Kunti and Naraini, received particular attention for their maltreatment; their names are still known in Fiji. Kunti, a 20-year-old lady from Gorakhpur's Lakhuapur village, and her husband had come to Fiji in 1908. The first four years Kunti spent on the farm were uneventful until 10 April 1912, when the supervisor gave her a secluded area in a banana field away from the other labourers, ostensibly with the goal of sexually abusing her (Kumar, *Indentured Labourers: Women*). Kunti refused to comply with his demands until she was so desperate that she jumped into the river. But Jaidev, a boy, came to her relief. After Kunti's tale was extensively publicized in the *Bharat Mitra*, the Indian government requested that the Fijian government launch an investigation into the mistreatment of Indian women who were held as slaves.

A horrifying scenario befell Naraini, a Fijian lady, when the overseer of an estate in Nadi required her to report for duty three or four days after giving birth to a dead child. Naraini declined, pointing out that it is customary for women to take up to three months off from labour-intensive work. Enraged, the overseer gave her a brutal beating that left her hardly able to move. He was found not guilty and exonerated by the Fijian Supreme Court after the case was heard there. Naraini later lost her senses and lived as an insane vagrant (Kumar, *Indentured Labourers: Women*).

At the time Kunti's narrative was released, there was a rising movement in India against the indenture system. In an attempt to defuse a delicate and potentially volatile situation and prevent political humiliation, the Government of India sought to expose the falsity of the story before it attains a wider currency. Fiji's colonial government complied. Reopening its files, the Immigration Department discovered purported contradictions in Kunti's previous evidence. Witnesses were coerced into making damaging claims, one of which was the Indian immigrant S.M. Saraswati, who denied speaking with Kunti or penning the piece for publication (Kumar, *Kunti's Cry*).

Thus, the stories of the Girmitiya women provide unique perspective on the relationships between pain, existence, belonging, and memory. Their experiences, which are ignored, highlight the diaspora's resiliency, cultural diversity, and continued hardships. By giving their voices recognition and volume, we not only recognize the special difficulties they encountered but also advance a broader comprehension of the Girmitiya experience. Girmitiya women carry on a heritage that continues to influence the cultural fabric of diasporic societies via their enduring narratives.

Girmitiyas' common identity is marred by internal betrayal, which includes unmet expectations and broken vows. It deconstructs the legacy of dissatisfaction caused by the discrepancy between the promises made during recruiting and the harsh realities encountered abroad. Girmitiyas's feeling of betrayal reverberates throughout generations. The generational echoes of betrayal are transmitted across time and influences

the identities and viewpoints of succeeding generations. Girmitiya's story is a voyage into the dark corners of pain, recollection, shared identity, and treachery. However, the seeds of resiliency, cultural preservation, and the ability to face an uncertain future are found inside these shadows. The indescribable experiences of the Girmitiyas, a community from northern India, are deeply entwined with stories about identity and place. Their stories, which are frequently unseen, call for attention and comprehension. By expressing the inexpressible, we are able to understand the intricacies of their identities, the difficulties they encountered, and the resilient spirit that helped them maintain a feeling of community in the face of hardship. The silence becomes an appeal to hear, recall, and respect the stories that are kept secret yet have shaped the Girmitiya people's cultural legacy.

Thus, Girmitiyas's personal narratives capture a remarkable journey filled with tragedy, displacement, and the complex process of identity building. The silence becomes an appeal to hear, recall, and respect the stories that are kept secret yet have shaped the Girmitiya people's cultural legacy. Therefore, their tales, passed down through creative and oral traditions, stand as examples of perseverance and the long-lasting effects of past injustices. At the end, when we reflect on their experiences, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of their tales and to respect the ongoing efforts to cure generational trauma and foster a sense of solidarity among the diaspora. As a result, the Girmitiyas leave behind a vibrant history that still has an impact on societies everywhere.

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