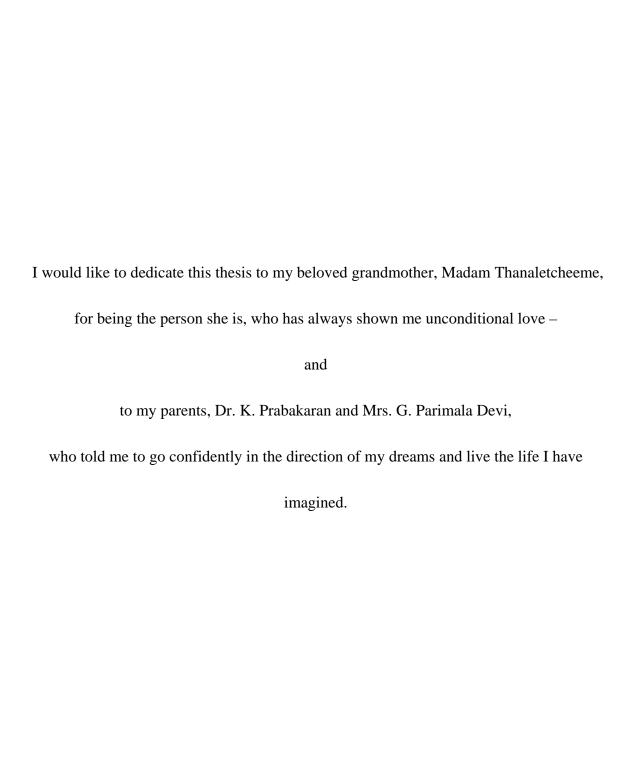
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Indo-Malaysians within the Malaysian Education System

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand



ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to explore the factors that limit the freedom of choice and access of the Indian community to tertiary level education in Malaysia. Issues of ethnic minorities are of concern for all multi-cultural societies. In Malaysia, it was the indentured labour system, introduced by the British colonial rulers who brought non-Malays into this previously mono-ethnic society. British colonisation has influenced the position of the Indian community in Malaysia in a number of ways, which are explored in this thesis. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the complexity of this plural society and its implications for one of its ethnic minority groups, particularly in terms of education. This sector has been examined as education is a fundamental component for socio-economic development and upward social mobility. Malaysia, a classic modern day plural society, has its own complexity in terms of issues of ethnic minorities. The findings of this thesis indicate four main factors limiting the freedom of choice and access to tertiary level education for the Indian community. These factors are the country's education policies, the financial situation of Indo-Malaysians, the attitude and awareness of the students, and the community's values. The findings are significant as it is believed that the advancement of the Indian community in Malaysia is currently obstructed through lack of access to tertiary level education. Before this situation can be improved it needs to be understood.

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