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Tamils have given a lot to this country

YOUR correspondent IR Perumal (Daily News, May 22) should not feel despondent about the silence of Tamil leaders regarding the abuse of the Tamil language.

The derision of Tamil-speaking Hindus through anti-Tamil plays and the radio will not undermine the contributions of one of South Africa's outstanding communities.

Sometimes it is prudent not to wait for leaders to act but for individuals and the masses to lobby for change in attitudes, objective portrayal and historical accuracy.

Tamil and Telegu-speaking Hindus turned the soil of this country into a foundation for the struggle against imperialism in the late 19th century, and later against apartheid.

Their contribution to what we today cherish as a rich tapestry of South Africaness should reflect on their past here as well as in India. They brought with them, among other things, thousands of years of continuous cultural history, a living tradition of music and dance, architecture, the Sangam or poets, academy, the structure of their society (which sharply contrasted with the caste system) and naval skills that were established around AD600, if not earlier.

In South Africa, Tamil and Telegu-speaking Hindus produced outstanding scholars, entrepreneurs, freedom fighters, cultural schools and community newspapers since the time they arrived in South Africa.

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