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INDO-FIJIAN EMIGRATION

A Case Study of the *Children of Girmitiya*

In

Wainasasa
(A Rural Community)

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INDO-FIJIAN EMIGRATION

A Case Study of the Children of Girmitya

In

Wainasasa

by

Lalita Devi Sharma

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in History and Politics

Department of History and Politics,
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December, 2001

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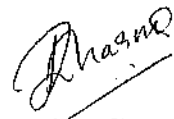

Lalita Sharma
December 2001

ABSTRACT

International migration has gradually become an exceptionally important issue for Fiji. Fiji's emigration is continually being linked to insecurity created by political and economic upheavals (Howard 1992).

Fiji, because of its multi-ethnic composition, has been labeled a plural society but ethnic cleavages make it potentially unstable. The fear of economic and political insecurity has been driving 5000-6000 people annually from Fiji since the coups of 1987. Statistics clearly show that emigration is an ethnic issue. More Indo-Fijians emigrate than any other ethnic group. Added to these reasons are the family re-unification grounds and the search for greener pastures.

Despite the loss of thousands of people from Fiji, the topic of emigration has been a rather silent subject in relation to scholarly debate in Fiji. Whatever little is written on the issue of emigration there are differing responses. Some view emigration as lack of loyalty and commitment to Fiji by Indo-Fijians. Contrary to this argument, the causes of emigration should be traced to unfair constitution, fears over personal safety, discrimination, lack of clear commitment by the government to multi-racial equality and the unavailability of land.

The present study questions some of the generalizations made by emigration theorists in relation to emigration trend from Fiji's plural society. It challenges the regional and general approach adopted by various emigration theorists.

Indo-Fijians are still regarded as *vulagi* (visitors), in their own country of birth, where they have lived for four or five generations. They face the stark prospect of political disenfranchisement and unequal citizenship. Unwanted and humiliated, fed up with coups, understandably many Indo-Fijians seek to re-build their lives in other countries.

By studying a specific local area this paper attempts to verify why emigration has been the only choice for the immigrant Indo-Fijian community in crisis situations. Generalizations by scholars of different disciplines do not specifically address the reasons for 'uprooting' and settling in a different environment. The 'push' has been so vigorous that not even a single house in the research site is without a family member living overseas. Clearly what happens at the national level affects the locals as well. A micro-level study gives a deeper understanding of why people move.

This thesis argues that the Indo-Fijian community has been 'uprooted' to such a level that the exodus will continue and no amount of political stability is going to change the tide. Perhaps genuine offer of dual citizenship and a compromise on salient issues may see some Indo-Fijians returning either to work or do business here again. I feel that process will be encouraging but admittedly slow and cumbersome.

For

Amma and Pitajiya

Children of *Girmitiya*

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GLOSSARY

Bahu	-	daughter-in-law
Brahmin	-	Priestly class in *Hindu* caste system
Girmitiya	-	indentured labourer
Junglee	-	hostile people
Kala Pani	-	black waters
Mataqali	-	Fijian landowning unit
Maatra Bhumi	-	birthplace
Narak	-	hell
Sasu	-	mother-in-law
Taukei	-	the indigenous Fijians
Vulagi	-	visitor

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CHAPTER ONE

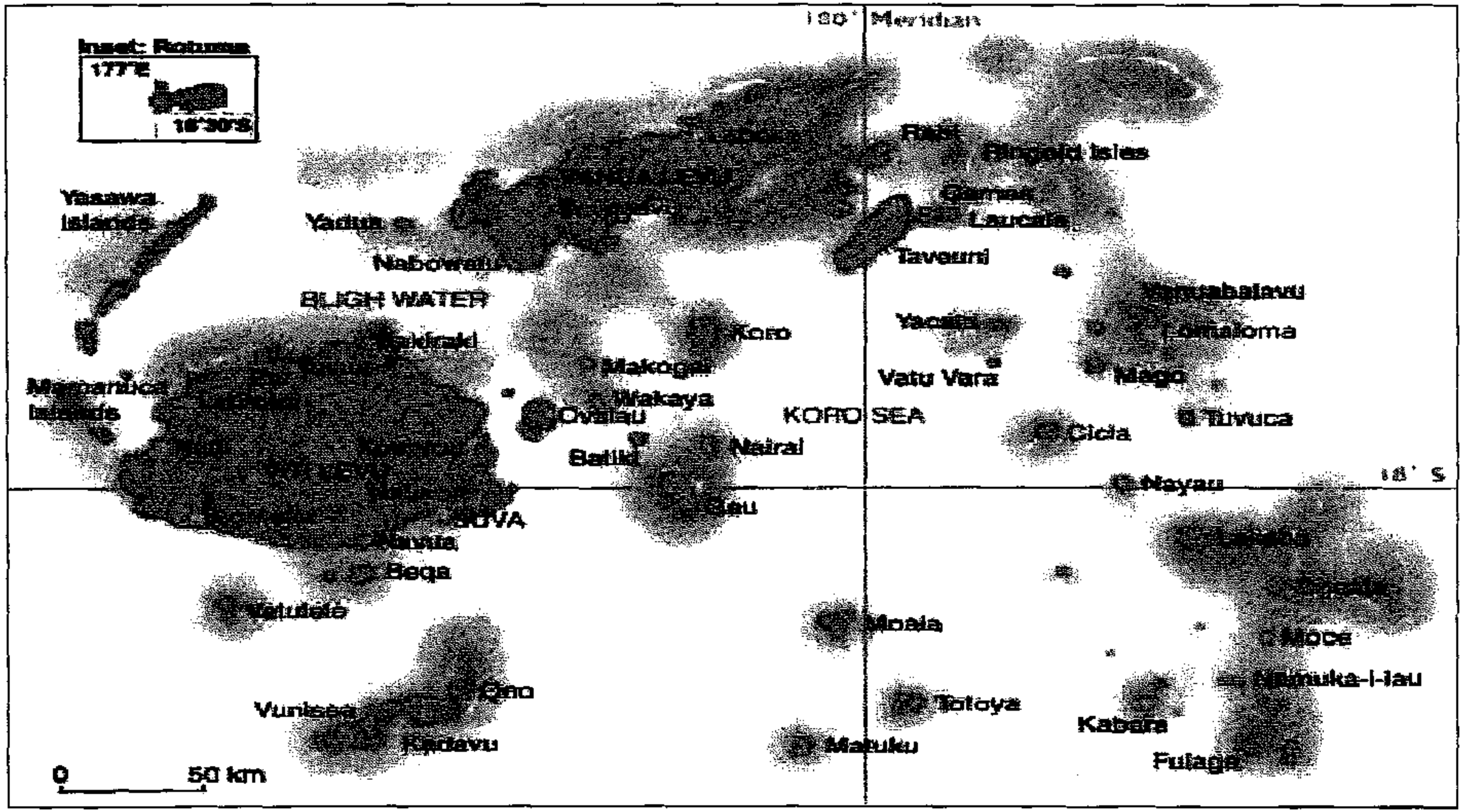
THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Migration has been part of human history. The crossing of national and international borders by individuals is so universal that scholars speculate that it is part of the human instinct to move. These movements are on the increase and are likely to influence factors in global change.

There are several reasons why people move. Inequality in wealth is likely to impel people to emigrate in search of better living standards. Political, ecological and demographic pressures may force many people to seek refuge outside their own countries; increasing political or ethnic conflict could lead to mass flights and the creation of new tax free trade areas may also cause the movement of people.

This chapter focuses on the contextual information on the study of Indo-Fijian emigration from Fiji. It briefly discusses the background, the reasons, the subjects of the study, the usefulness of the study, the methodology applied for research, and the organization of the thesis.


180° Meridian
Inset: Rotuma
177°E
Yasawa Islands
Yadua
Nabowalu
BLIGH WATER
Rakiraki
Mamanuca Islands
Koro
Makogai
Wakaya
Ovalau
Batiki
Nairai
Gau
KORO SEA
SUVA
Navua
Beqa
Vatulele
Ono
Vunisea
Kadavu
0
50 km
Rabi
Ringgold Isles
Qamea
Laucala
Taveuni
Vanuabalavu
Lomaloma
Yacata
Vatu Vara
Mago
Tuvuca
Cicia
Nayau
18° S
Lakeba
Moala
Moce
Namuka-i-lau
Totoya
Kabara
Matuku
Fulaga

BACKGROUND

Fiji is labeled as a 'plural' society (Mayer 1963, Norton 1977). People of different religions, races, languages and cultures live here. However, Fiji's multi-racial society is politically, economically and socially segmented along ethnic lines. The two major races are indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. They form 95 per cent of the total population while the remaining 5 per cent are Rotumans, Europeans, Part-Europeans, Chinese and others (Bureau of Statistics, 1996:1).

The indigenous Fijians are mainly *Melanesians.* The eastern part of the country is more *Polynesian* as a result of invasions by the *Tongans* in the pre-colonial period (Lawson 1990:798-199). Consequently, Fiji's 320 islands (see Map 1, *Fiji Islands* pg. 2) in the middle of the South Pacific have developed their own identity with a mixture of Polynesian and Melanesian peoples and culture forming the indigenous population of Fiji.

Indo-Fijians, the second major ethnic group, are the direct descendants of *indentured* labourers brought from India by the British to work on sugar cane plantations between 1879-1916. Other segments of the Indo-Fijian population are mainly Gujaratis and Punjabis who came to Fiji as 'free' emigrants to trade as merchants and artisans. Their descendants now comprise the strong business community in Fiji.

At the end of 1996 the indigenous Fijians comprised approximately 50.8% of the total population of 775,077 compared to 43.7% Indo-Fijians. The remaining 5.5% were others - comprising Europeans, Part-Europeans, Rotumans, Chinese and Pacific Islanders. Table 1.1 shows that Indo-Fijian population declined by 5 per cent while the indigenous Fijian population increased by 4.7 per cent between 1986 and 1996.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY OF KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS FOR FIJI BY ETHNICITY FROM POPULATION CENSUS OF 1986 & 1996

ETHNIC CATEGORY	END 1986	%	END 1996	%
Fijian	329,305	46.1	393,575	50.8
Fiji Indian	348,704	48.7	338,818	43.7
Other	37,366	5.2	42,684	5.5
TOTAL	**715,375**	**100.0**	**775,077**	**100.0**

Source: Bureau of Statistics

It was only in the late 1980s that indigenous Fijians outnumbered Indo-Fijians. Large-scale emigration of Indo-Fijians after the 1987 military coups was the main reason for their decline in population. The other factor is the declining fertility among the Indo-Fijians (Bureau of Statistics, 1996). Since the indigenous Fijians have outnumbered Indo-Fijians the gap is widening due to the combined effects of both the above factors.

The population of Fiji is concentrated on the two main islands of *Viti Levu* and *Vanua Levu*. About 60 per cent of this population live in rural areas. Fiji's economy is linked to the capitalist world market economy. Its income lies at the mercy of factors and forces well beyond Fiji's control depending on the international market situations.

Agriculture is a main source of livelihood for the people of Fiji both as an earner of revenue and an activity for subsistence as well. Sugar and to a lesser extent copra are its major agricultural exports. Earning from various pine schemes has been an important foreign exchange income for Fiji as well. Forestry, especially the 'controversial' *mahogany* project, will play an increasingly important part in Fiji's income in the near future.

The island of *Viti Levu* is the focus of the main economic activities with many urban centres. Most manufacturing industries are located on *Viti Levu*. In the manufacturing sector, the garment industry became the third largest foreign exchange earner and accounted for 28 per cent of local weekly wage employment in 1999.

There is considerable reliance on tourism. The major hotels are also concentrated on the western side of *Viti Levu*. Prior to the coups of 2000, tourism was the main foreign exchange income earner for Fiji.

A Brief Historical and Political Overview

At this time, it is necessary to provide an overview of the historical and political situation in Fiji as well. To understand the current emigration trend, it is essential to have a basic understanding of the history of race relations in Fiji. This will allow the reader to better understand the current political situation in which emigration is represented and provide a basis for further analysis of emigration in a political atmosphere.

Fiji has never been politically unified and there have always been local variations in culture. The two major ethnicities in Fiji have a history of both political and cultural separation. The current emigration trend has not happened by accident. Its roots go back to the *Deed of Cession* and the land charter that formed the basis of the colonial administration (See Appendix 1).

The nineteenth century was a period of fundamental change for most islands in the Pacific Ocean. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, *'the era of European discovery, exploration and itinerant trading was over paving the way for more intensive political and commercial contact between outsiders and the people of the islands'* (Lal, 1992:5). Fiji could not be excluded from this trend. However frequent internal strife between various groups in Fiji disrupted a stable environment for commercial activity. The solution to the problem of control and of government was to cede Fiji to the British. This was done by the paramount

chief, Ratu Seru Cakobau and 11 other chiefs mainly from the East. These chiefs were subsequently permitted to play an important role in the Fijian administration system by means of which colonial control over the native population was mediated with the active participation of the colonised elite. While accepting the Cession, Sir Hercules Robinson promised on behalf of the Crown that:

> *The rights and interests of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs and the ceding parties hereto shall be recognised so far as is and shall be consistent with British Sovereignty and Colonial form of government. All claims to title to land by whomsoever preferred and all claims to pensions or allowances whether on the part of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs or of persons now holding office under them or any of them shall in due course be fully investigated and equitably adjusted.*
>
> *Quoted in* (Lal, 1992:12)

Robinson according to Lal (1992: 12) created the 'rudimentary administrative structure' but the 'permanent administrative foundations' for future course of the colony were left for his successor. After serving as governor in Trinidad and later in Mauritius, both colonies worked by *indentured* labourers imported from India, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon came to Fiji in 1875 as the first resident colonial governor.

Gordon found the new colony in acute distress. An epidemic of measles had recently killed almost 40,000 indigenous Fijians. The European settlers were demanding for a quick and generous ratification of much of the best land in the

colony they claimed as being theirs. Capital was scarce because of the slump in cotton prices and the Crown had also reduced its grant from one hundred and fifty thousand to one hundred thousand pounds because of the decline in indigenous population. Gordon had to make quick decisions to solve the colony's problems of land, labour and capital to make it self-sustaining as the Colonial Office had directed. Gordon said:

> *We want capital invested in the colony. We want a cheap, abundant, and certain supply of labour; we want means of communication; we want justice to be readily and speedily administered; we want facilities for education; and lastly (though, perhaps, that interest me more nearly and especially than you), we want revenue.*
>
> (Gordon 1897:194 *quoted in* Lal 1992:13)

Colonisation unified the various groups in Fiji and the political environment become more stable for foreign companies to invest in Fiji. The colonial government persuaded the Australian based *Colonial Sugar Refining Company* (CSR) to extend its operations to Fiji. For nearly a century (1882-1973) this company and sugar formed the backbone of Fiji's economy.

Sugar production not only depended on capital but on a reliable source of cheap labour. Cheap, reliable and abundant supply of labour as well could not be obtained locally. Because of experience with Indian labourers in Trinidad and Mauritius, Gordon turned to India for a consistent supply. The first group of 479

workers arrived from India in May, 1879. When indenture ceased in 1916, 60639 Indians had arrived in Fiji (Gillion, 1962). This solved the problem of labour.

Gordon's most important policy decision concerned the indigenous population. The Governor came to Fiji with paternalistic ideas. He believed that *'native races had been shamefully exploited in other parts of the British Colonial Empire'* (Gillion 1962:5). Therefore, Fijian interests had to be protected under any cost. These interests included the protection of the Fijian land, sea, customs and traditions.

Gordon began a system of *'indirect rule'*. He identified those aspects of the traditional Fijian political system, which were tractable to European manipulation. A chiefly body, 'Great Chiefly Council' (or Council of Chiefs as it was popularly known) was created that advised the governor on native Fijian affairs. It also assisted him in formulating native regulations. The Native Labour Ordinance restricted the recruitment and commercial employment of Fijian labour in plantations. The Native Taxation Scheme was devised to enable the Fijians to meet tax obligations in kind and thereby live communally without recourse to employment for wages. Land laws prohibited any further sale of land - 83 per cent of the total land was placed in Fijian hands. The Native Lands Commission was created to assess the validity of settler land claims and to determine the structure of indigenous land ownership.

Indirect rule was necessary in Fiji because of the relatively small number of resident Europeans compared with the size of the native population. In Gordon's words:

> *So long as the native population outnumbers the European by a hundred to one, it is through these chiefs that the country will be most peacefully cheaply and easily governed. And the governor has already observed that in those districts where...the chiefs have lost their hold on the people, the administration of affairs is attended with a difficulty and confusion unknown elsewhere. If deprived of position and employment they (the chiefs) would, not improbably, from being docile and useful instruments, become a constant source of trouble, if not - or even - of danger.*
>
> (*Quoted in* Gillion 1962:32)

Thus Gordon consciously saw the indirect rule system in Fiji as a practical necessity of colonial rule. While devising the *native policies* Gordon completely forgot about the large number of Indians who were soon to flow into the country. He only seemed concerned about solving the problems of the day by protecting the small European settlers and the indigenous population. Lal (1992:14) noted that *'it is difficult to name another colony anywhere, during the nineteenth century, even without the intense settler opposition that Gordon encountered, in which the land, institutions and customs of an indigenous people were so well protected'.*

However, the imposition of *indirect rule* was not universally accepted. In practical terms this meant that the more hierarchical and authoritarian Bauan chiefly system became the model for Fijian native administration everywhere.

Rebellions against the system of rule thus established were more frequent than is commonly thought (the most important was the so-called 'little war' of Western Viti Levu) but the process of colonial incorporation proceeded without serious opposition. Ravuvu states (1991:32)

> *.....through the strong arms of the colonial government, independent and autonomous groups brought to live and be administered under one authority or chiefdom. Rebellious groups and their chiefs were subdued with strong and harsh measures. Many were tried and condemned to execution or long-term imprisonment with hard labour.*

While Gordon's policies protected the land, institutions and customs of the indigenous people, I agree with Atu Bain that the official policy of '*benevolent protectionism*' concerning Fijian labour '*masked an array of legislative measures which ably defended the interests of plantation capital*' (1988:136). On the one hand, the majority of Fijians remained by-standers in developing Fiji, while their land was used for capital gains. On the other hand the condition of Indians on British plantations was almost like slaves. It was easier to manage plantations by separating the two races. The Fijian economic system was such that most Indo-

Fijians were employed in sugarcane operations and most of the indigenous Fijians were confined to their traditional occupations in their villages.

Over the years, the Indians in Fiji prospered. Their service as indentured workers entitled them to permanent residence in Fiji. The majority made Fiji their home. The government of India sanctioned their emigration with the broad proviso, articulated by Lord Salisbury, secretary of state for colonies in 1875, that:

> *'Indian settlers who have completed the terms of service to which they agreed, as the return for the expense of bringing them to the Colonies, will be in all respects free men, with privileges no whit inferior to those of any other class of Her Majesty's subjects resident in the Colonies'*[1] (Quoted in Lal 1992:16).

No doubt, I agree with Lal (1992:16) that *'this statement by Salisbury would be constantly revived and would echo down the years in the Indian community as a charter of rights just as the Deed of Cession was for the Fijians'*.

Indian presence in Fiji for over a century has been a success story, which has remained the major source of resentment against them. Indirect rule by way of separate native administration introduced by Gordon, preserved the culture and way of life of the indigenous Fijians but also made them observers in the

[1] Lord Salisbury's dispatch predates the beginning of Indian immigration to Fiji by four years, and it did not specifically mention Fiji. But the intention that Indians settled in the colonies would enjoy full rights was re-affirmed by the government of Fiji at intervals throughout the twentieth century. Interestingly, in this context, the 'paramountcy of Fijian interests' so often attributed to the Deed of Cession never actually appears in the document. (Notes copied from Lal 1992:346)

developing Fiji. They were isolated from the mainstream of colonial politics as well. It is argued that these effects are largely responsible for many of the economic problems that the Fijians continue to experience but which are frequently blamed on the Indo-Fijian community who have become a convenient scapegoat. Faced with these conditions many Indo-Fijians seek to emigrate.

The colonial government kept the two ethnic groups divided to protect the interest of the capitalists. Following the policy of *'divide and rule'*, they maintained and inspired the belief that *'the Indians who had multiplied and outnumbered all others in the population, held a predominant share of economic power and if they were given equal political rights, they would take over the country which legitimately belongs to the Fijians'*. (It may be noted here that at the time of independence Indians outnumbered the Fijians).

For this reason the British imposed a system of communal rolls in the 1966 constitution which meant that people were divided into separate electorates on the basis of their ethnic groups. Two major political parties emerged during that time namely - The National Federation Party (NFP) with its support base predominantly among Indo-Fijians and the Alliance Party with its support base among indigenous Fijians. The system of communal electoral roll continued after independence.

Under this condition, it was absolutely impossible to achieve a reasonable basis for representation based on majority rule. Indian demand for common roll (one man, one vote) was rejected on the ground that it might dilute the Fijian political identity.

However the reality is different. Indian dominated multiracial parties have won three general elections (that is 1977, 1987 and 1999). In 1977, the National Federation Party failed to form the government due to its internal dissesions. In this situation former Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara was invited to govern in a caretaker capacity until the next general elections.

In 1987, Dr Timoci Bavadra's Labour Party was overthrown in a coup led by a third ranking officer in the military, Sitiveni Rabuka. An ex-army officer, Jim Sandy (1989) wrote that *'the coup of 1987 overthrew a newly elected multiracial government and reinstalled the former Fijian elite led regime which espoused the traditional order and the Fijian way yet also aimed to preserve its own privileged position in both Fijian society and modern economy'*. Rabuka's regime included a number of members from the Alliance Party, who had lost the 1987 general election.

The multiracial Labour Party again won the 1999 general election with a huge majority. This time a failed businessman and sacked Chairman of Fiji Hardwood Corporation, George Speight, with the assistance of a branch of the Fiji Military

Forces seized parliament. The first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhary and his government were held hostage for 52 days.

Speight claimed his insurrection was designed to restore indigenous Fijian paramountcy and abrogate the multiracial 1997 constitution, which had hoped to blur the country's racial divide. Like Rabuka in 1987, Speight portrayed himself as a faithful servant of Fijian race. Unfortunately the tide turned against him when the military did not comply with some of his demands. On May 29, 1999 the military under Commodore Frank Bainimarama staged a counter coup, declared Martial Law and assumed executive powers. Later he appointed an ethnic Fijian Laisenia Qarase to head a caretaker administration with all indigenous members. At present Speight is imprisoned on the island of Nukulau awaiting a trial for treason.

New elections are due in August 2001, under the 1997 Constitution. While most Indo-Fijians are likely vote to for their two major parties (Fiji Labour Party and the National Federation Party), the indigenous Fijian population are confused with at least 20 parties to choose from. The large number of Fijian parties bring to the focus the communal feelings that exist in the indigenous Fijian society. The Fijian divide is one of the major reasons for instability in the country that causes an ethnically based emigration.

It is clear enough evidence to show that people have voted across racial lines and there are more important issues involved than race for the people of Fiji. Race obviously is a crucial factor in the analysis of the politics but the problem is aggravated by vested interests to fulfill their own objectives.

The indirect rule system established in Fiji was an attempt to adapt existing social formations to the requirements of European rule. The principal indigenous beneficiary of indirect rule was the eastern chiefly hierarchy, while the major losers were the inhabitants of central and western Viti Levu. The way in which traditional social formations were incorporated into the system of colonial administration left a legacy of uneven development and was the basis for subsequent social and economic inequality in an independent Fiji.

A lecturer in Pacific Studies at the Victoria University of Wellington Teresia Teaiwa (*Fiji Times*, 25 May 2000) says that *'the real struggle is amongst indigenous Fijians, and it is continually masked by the rhetoric of a racial conflict between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians'*. Threat to land and slogans like 'Fiji for Fijians' are used to exacerbate the already existing problems. However, the fact is that the ongoing conflict may be more accurately seen as a result of the power struggle between feudalism and the rising middle class, traditionalism and modernism and the politically powerful eastern chiefs and prosperous Fijians of western and urban Fiji.

Emigration from Fiji cannot be studied by disregarding the policy of *divide and rule* so prevalent in colonial occupied lands. Interaction between Fijians and Indians were discouraged that led to the occupational and geographical concentration of labour developed along racial lines as opposed to social classes. People viewed themselves as ethnicities not as unified social classes. The Indo-Fijian has been made convenient scapegoats in the struggle for power and ascendancy among the indigenous Fijian groups.

The post-coup periods have been one of trauma and turmoil not once but twice for the Indo-Fijians. The professionals, the businessmen and those who could obtain emigrant visas left Fiji for other countries thereby bringing in demographic change, which ended their predominant position. The coup by George Speight not only denied the Indo-Fijians their political rights but it also was an attempt to strike at their economic backbone by taking away the land they have farmed for generations.

These conditions have arisen as a result of the indirect rule imposed by the British. It is most unfortunate that Indo-Fijians are projected as being 'villains, who will grab the land', which they only rented from the Fijian owners. Little do the power brokers realise that non-renewal of leases would also destroy sugar industry, which brings a major portion of country's foreign exchange and substantial part of the government revenue. Fijians must face the truth before it is too late. As for the Indo-Fijians, I agree with Lal that they feel 'traumatised,

terrorised, emotionally uprooted and are made to feel unwanted', thus they will continue to leave.

REASONS FOR THE STUDY

Although emigration to metropolitan countries has been an important area of research in the Pacific (Bedford 1989, Connell ed. 1990, Jones 1976), it has not received much attention in Fiji. Fiji's emigration is continually been linked to insecurity created by political and economic upheavals (Howard 1992). The people of Indian descent (Indo-Fijians) were just over 50 per cent prior to the military coups of 1987 but sharply declined to the present level of 42 per cent and continues to deplete largely due to emigration.

Emigration increased dramatically in the 2-3 years following the 1987 coups, with about 44,000 people leaving the country between 1987 and 1990. The outflow has steadied at about 5,000 to 6,000 per annum. With the execution of the 2000 coup, a cloud of uncertainty and insecurity hangs over Fiji and people who were bent on staying are thinking of moving again.

Emigration has raised concerns in non-government circles such as the employer and business groups however, the government of Fiji remains virtually silent on the issue. The government, by and large, has shown little concern and has been

concentrating on indigenous Fijian development since independence. Certain individual's like the former Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka also felt that *'mass migration of Indo-Fijians would bring their numbers to a manageable level'* (Sharpham 1998:101). The fright of Indian dominance is prevalent and therefore the silence of Fijian-dominated government on emigration of largely Indo-Fijians is understandable.

Emigration will have a considerable implication for the country's social and economic development. Those who go take with them skill and talent which a small development country can ill afford to lose. The massive outflow of mostly skilled people erodes the basis for economic growth. The World Bank (1990:6) raised concern about the scale of emigration and its impact on Fiji's supply of skilled manpower. According to the survey, the emigration loss was especially concentrated among those with skills badly needed by a developing country to maintain its economic well-being and sustain growth. The report says:

> *Fiji's quite abundant supply of skills was threatened by the political events of 1987. Prior to that, about 500 workers emigrated annually; in the years following the coups d'etat, emigration rose sharply to about 2,500 or 1 per cent of the work force. Emigration has particularly affected the supply of high and middle-level staff. According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics, of those employed at the time of the 1986 census, about 7 per cent of the professional and technical, 17 per cent of the administration and managerial, and 8 per cent of the clerical staff has left the country by late 1988...Key professions were particularly hard hit; it is reported that 70 per cent of the lawyers, over 50 per cent of the doctors, 40 per cent of the accountants, and many architects, engineers, technicians and teachers have recently left Fiji; vacancy rates from some key public services still range from 30 to 50 per cent.*

More recently a World Bank study (1995:23) again reported that:

> *This outflow imposes huge costs to (sic) the economy, both in terms of the direct low investment in human capital and lost future earnings. Fitting the jobs with expatriate workers can cost anywhere from 2-4 times the cost of a local worker, and further reduces the competitiveness of the Fijian economy.*

However, in 1997, Jonetani Kaukimoce, a Minister with Special Responsibilities in the Prime Minister's Office, felt otherwise. Migration, he argued, *'is the result of positive policies which are making our people better trained, more marketable, and widening their horizons'* (Robertson 1998:153). The departure of many highly skilled Indo-Fijians has certainly created opportunities for the rapid upward mobility of many indigenous Fijians who now dominate the civil service. However, the formal job creation has fallen seriously short of the number of fresh entrants to the labour force. About 13,000 school leavers compete for 1500 jobs created each year.

One of the more extreme predictions is that Fiji will lose 20 per cent of the population through emigration in the next two years then another 30 per cent in about five years time (*Fiji Times,* 19 March 2001). The Public Service Commission report stated that 72 civil servants were part of the skilled workers' mass exodus as a result of the May 19 takeover of Parliament. Most of them were doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants and clerical officers (The *Fiji Times,* 28 August 2000). Loss of skilled manpower (human capital) affects the supply in

economic growth. The concern is that the potential exodus of people (skilled and others) could impoverish Fiji.

Mass migration causes significant population changes. This will create fundamental differences to the structure of the workforce, particularly with regards to participation of different ethnic categories in different occupational groups. In 1992, for example out of 120 new student intake in the Fiji School of Nursing, only 33 per cent were Indo-Fijians and by 1997 it reduced to only 30 per cent. It shows that the chance of job security for Indo-Fijians is sliming.

Prior to the coups of 1987, I was employed as a Bank Officer in Suva and left Fiji to settle in New Zealand. Despite several admonitions I returned to serve my country of birth once again on 1 January 1993 after Fiji returned to form of parliamentary democracy in the 1992 general elections that restored some basic human rights such as freedom of speech and assembly.

However, I noticed that many had left Fiji for good in the six years while I was away. Prospective emigrants were not prepared to wait for democracy to be restored in Fiji. I observed that Fiji was no longer a land of opportunities. Workers (mostly women) were exploited in garment factories, students knocked on doors for scholarships, nepotism infected all sectors of employment and the civil service became a Fijian reserve. The Indo-Fijian community was largely

affected by this change. I decided to study emigration to obtain personal opinions of why other Indo-Fijians emigrate.

Another reason why I undertook to study this topic was that the few researchers on Fiji's emigration (Connell 1983, Bedford 1987) tend to use broad macro-approaches to study emigration from Fiji. Quite often they attempt to locate Fiji's international migratory patterns within regional trends, that is Melanesian and Polynesian movements. This may create a theoretical problem because over 90 per cent emigrants are Indo-Fijians. They are a re-settled community and quite often they are not seen as belonging to the Pacific community. For this reason their movement cannot be compared with Pacific islanders.

Indo-Fijian emigration should be studied in relation to bipolar states or resettled states like Guyana, Trinidad and Mauritius. However, this research is not a comparative study, but particularly focuses on Indo-Fijian emigration of the *children of the girmitiya*, who were introduced in Fiji, encouraged to settle and now unfortunate circumstances are forcing them to search for new homes. The 'push' factors can only come to focus if the community is studied separately.

Another reason, which prompted my interest in this study, was because of my personal encounters with the poor of this country. My visions were widened on social problems faced by Indo-Fijians as a result of my association with NGOs.

Many people have indicated to me that 'they do not want to live in a country where there is no one to listen to them'.

The Indo-Fijian social crisis cannot be ignored. Table 1.2. shows Indo-Fijian suicide rate which ranks amongst one of the highest in the world.

TABLE: 1.2 SUICIDE RECORDS 1 JANUARY TO 1 NOVEMBER 2000

	SUICIDES	ATTEMPTED SUICIDES
Indo-Fijians	73	90
Fijians	12	5
Others	4	1
TOTAL	**89**	**96**

Source: Fiji Post, November 2,2000

Not only the government but the regional organizations as well ignore the plight of Indo-Fijians. The notion that Indo-Fijians are naturally better off than Fijians in education and business is not correct. The 1996 Fiji Poverty Report demonstrated that while Fijian households in general had the lowest income, lower income Indians were worse off than lower income Fijians. Half of the poor are Indians, with income 14 per cent lower than Fijians. Middle income groups are dominated by Fijians. Only a small proportion of high-income households is an Indian household better off than high income Fijians (*Fiji Times*, 23 July 1998:3).

However, the perceptions remain that Fijians are worst hit by poverty. They make up 60 per cent of the Department of Social Welfare clients. The Department explained this by reference to a decline in communal care, family fragmentation and higher Fijian urban growth. Whereas the Destitutes' Allowance System was designed primarily for indigent Indian males, often former indentured workers, by as early 1979, 59 per cent of the recipients were Fijians, most living in rural areas (Bienefeld 1984:322). A government that is supposed to look after all its citizens seem only concerned for the indigenous population. Indo-Fijians affected by these situations are vulnerable and feel emigration may improve their status.

The other burning issue that confronts Indians in Fiji is 'land'. Security of land tenure and eviction has been the major problem for the tenant Indo-Fijians. Indians in Fiji have been well informed of Idi Amin's actions that led to eventual expulsion of Indians in Uganda. Indo-Fijians know too well that they cannot be owners of land and frequently question whether the Ugandan crisis could happen here. The recent event of farm seizures in Zimbabwe also makes the Indo-Fijians frightened of their future. The fear persists because no government or organization in Fiji is prepared to talk on the issues of land - all regard it as a sensitive subject.

Indo-Fijian emigration cannot be understood without analysing the issues of land and land ownership. This important issue of insecurity of land tenure is a major 'push' factor in the emigration of Indo-Fijians.

The Land Question

The *Deed of Cession* (Kamikamica 1997:269), that enabled Fiji to become a British Crown colony, 'was more of a land charter than a normal document of formal transfer of sovereignty'. Indeed it was a 'land charter' as it appears from the clauses 1,4,5,6,7. Only clauses 2 and 3 do not mention the word **'land'** (See Appendix 1).

Control of land was a major issue of contention between the early European settlers and Fijians. The British always had New Zealand in mind while considering Fiji's situation. The prolonged guerrilla war in New Zealand with the British settlers and Maori population therefore, had a profound effect on the way Fiji was administered as a crown colony especially in relation to land matters. The Colonial Office ruled out taking land by a war of conquest against Fijians.

Yet the land was to be exploited. It was a colonial strategy[2] within which Governor Gordon decided to bring in Indian migrants to ensure that Fiji developed economically while protecting the indigenous population from the changes it would cause.

Table 1.3 shows the composition of land ownership in Fiji, as indicated by Nayacakalou (1971). Indigenous Fijian land-owning units, own 83 per cent of the land classed as 'native land'. Some 10 per cent is owned by the state classed as 'crown land', which is subdivided into two categories: crown land schedule A; and crown land schedule B. Schedule A is native land that reverted to the state after the demise of the land-owning group. Schedule B is state land that is not claimed by any land-owning group. (The Schedule A and B land is being transferred as native land). Only 7 per cent of the land is classified as 'freehold' that can be sold on the open market.

Table 1.3: Categories of Land Ownership in Fiji

	Percentage of total area
Native Land	83
Crown Land	10
Freehold	7
TOTAL	100

Source: Nayacakalou, R. 1971. *Land Tenure in the Pacific*

[2]. For this reason Gordon's native policies had no problem with acceptance in London. In 1876 Herbert wrote to Gordon telling him that: '*The native policy was, as you have anticipated, rather a large pill to swallow but we have swallowed it basically in order to give the chance you desire to proving that you can govern the natives instead of killing them off*'. .(Cited in Gillion 1962:11)
(In 1875, the Fijians were a dying race, 15-20 percent died in measles epidemic. For this reason as well an outside source of labour was necessary.

This type of land distribution implied that the insecure migrant Indians who were uprooted by British activity in their villages in India were to remain and have the same status of being land-less peasants in Fiji. Gordon made the native Fijians landlords of tenant Indian farmers. Their children's fate was to remain at the mercy of the indigenous owners of the land. The Indo-Fijians have been cheated in the sense that their 'ignorant, illiterate and insecure' ancestors who had little knowledge of stringent land policy were given the option of remaining in Fiji.

Thousands of Indo-Fijian tenants are making a bleak entry into the 21st century as their leases expire. On 31 December 2000, 1789 leases expired and about 1500 will expire at the end of this year (2001). According to the Native Land Trust Board by 2026 about 13,112 leases will expire. Indo-Fijians are now in a situation where freehold state land is limited.

The land issue is fraught with tension and is the potential flash-point in Fijian politics that is expressed in racial terms. Recently, the governing body on native land 'Native Land Trust Board' placed a condition on all new lease arrangements. In the 'conditional lease' the native land tenants will not be allowed to take part in cane harvest boycotts and any other political or union activities that may affect landowners (The *Fiji Times*, April 3, 2001 p.3). The clause reads:

> *The lessee shall not use or intend to use this lease contract for any negative purposes other than obtaining lease security over this land. Negative purposes include activities such as cane harvest*

boycotts, farmers strikes and any other political or union activity that may jeopardise and purport to cause detriment and economic loss to the overall welfare of the lessor and the relevant native landowners.

Land is frequently politicized by power seeking individuals. Some nationalists (*Taukei*) preach the natives that Indian demand for more land will deprive the natives of their land rights, thus creating baseless fears in the minds of the native Fijians. While, the fact remains that the laws of the country justifiably protect the land rights of the natives.

The land question is one of the most divisive and political issues in Fiji. Land will remain a sensitive subject. Therefore, each government has deferred the problems relating to the land for next one to solve. However, the first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhary despite warning from the President, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, still attempted to extend the life of leases under the provisions of Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act (ALTA). Chaudhary's action became part of the cause of the May 2000 coup as a result of which many tenant Indo-Fijians were terrorised and told to vacate the land by the landowners.

The coups have propelled Fiji into racial, economic, social and cultural chaos and the Indo-Fijians were targeted by groups of indigenous people who, vulnerable due to their social protocols, were made to believe that the root cause of all troubles in Fiji are the Indians. The attacks on Indo-Fijians in the rural areas

during the 2000 coup were designed to push them from their freehold properties. They acted like the '*junglees*' (bushmen) as the first *girmitiya* had perceived them to be. As a result 52 families from a rural settlement of *Muaniweni* vacated their properties and are resident in a refugee camp on the western part of *Viti Levu* for more than a year.

Racial harmony has severely been damaged after the coups of 1987. This feeling was revived after 19 May 2000 takeover of Parliament. Perpetrators of both coups used race and racial issues to incite vulnerable primarily rural Fijian communities to turn against their Indo-Fijian neighbours resulting in nationwide riots, looting, burning and abuse of many Indo-Fijian families.

Coups undermine the justice system. Ensuing terrorism, coupled with the total inaction from law enforcement institutions makes the Indo-Fijians feel that laws could be broken with impunity in Fiji if the crime is committed against them. A respondent from *Wainasasa* commented:

> *We should form our own vigilante group. We cannot depend on the police to protect us anymore. Police know who the criminals are and do not arrest them, perhaps they too are part of the team. We all should go to a country where people respect the law.*

Indo-Fijian emigration is expected to be maintained and probably significantly increase for some time to come because of insecurity and discrimination. I

consider this issue of emigration is important for Fiji and much more attention should be given to this topic.

STUDIES TAKEN SO FAR

Unfortunately, emigration has not received much attention in Fiji compared to other countries. Jones (1976) carried out the first detailed study of emigration. She manually analysed the aspects of emigration using immigration cards while undertaking undergraduate studies at the University of the South Pacific.

She found that the majority of emigrants were Indo-Fijians (Jones 1976:28) who were mostly from the capital city, Suva (Jones 1976:22). Between 1966-1969 the average net migration rose to 855 (Jones 1976:9). The rate of emigration increased sharply immediately after independence reaching a peak in 1973. Jones also found that the majority of emigrants were young, either young married couples, students or the children of older migrants (Jones 1976:21).

The next major study was undertaken by Connell (1985) as part of a wider study of migration, employment and development in the South Pacific. He commented that:

> *For more than a decade, emigration from Fiji has had enormous significance; and especially the emigration of Indians, mainly to North America, primarily to Canada (Connell 1985:48)*

Connell provided a historical discussion of emigration and was more interested in the level and direction of emigration, and discussed the consequences of movement. He pointed out the significant skills losses from emigration. He said (Connell 1985; 1985:53):

> The most *striking conclusion on the impact of international migration from Fiji is that it constituted a very substantial skill and brain drain.*

Bedford (1989) wrote on Fijian migration to New Zealand. He highlighted the impact of the 1987 coups on emigration to New Zealand saying: '57 per cent of the total net gain of around 10,700 during the 1980s is accounted for during the period April 1987 to March 1990 (Bedford 1989:147). Bedford also discussed the gender and age characteristics of migrants as well as the categories under which migrants entered New Zealand.

Chetty and Prasad (1993) provide a study of emigration highlighting the serious economic implications of high levels of emigration. They discuss the magnitude of emigration and its labour market and other consequences. They point out the dangers of relying on data on formal emigration and suggested alternative methodology for studying emigration. They provide detailed analyses of skill

losses to Fiji due to emigration, and include case studies of teachers and workers in the sugar industry.

Naidu (1997) provides the most recent study of emigration from Fiji that awarded her a Masters Degree at the University of the South Pacific, Suva. She looked at why professionals emigrated from Fiji. Her case study was on emigration of Medical Doctors and she concluded that there were various reasons why doctors emigrated. She attempted to assess the likely impact on the standard of Fiji's health services.

All these studies have considered emigration generally and have not discussed Indo-Fijian emigration in detail. However, Geddes (1987/88) on the other hand did mention in some detail why Indo-Fijians emigrate. He argues that Indo-Fijians emigrate for material benefits.

I will review these works in greater detail in Chapter three. The brief outlines given here should suffice, as the background for my own interpretation. Most of the studies mentioned above have primarily discussed the trends in emigration and are concerned with emigration generally. Considering the volume and pattern of emigration in Fiji, the main thrust of my study is to show that Indo-Fijian emigration should be studied on its own.

None of these studies has been conducted at the village level. I chose to do my field-work in Wainasasa close to Nausori on the island of *Viti Levu* . This study is the first to discuss the factors that cause rural people to emigrate. Statistics reveal that the most who emigrate are skilled individuals and professionals. However, unskilled and lesser-educated people also emigrate. This is the first study inquiring why and how unskilled people initiate emigration.

THE SUBJECTS OF RESEARCH

The subjects studied under this research are the descendants of the *girmitiya*. The *girmitiya* was brought from India to work in Fiji as labourers under the *indentured labour system*. However, other Indians also came, but not under this system. Most of them were Gujarati and Punjabi business people. The majority of the entrepreneurs in Fiji are not the *'children of the girmitya'*, they are the children of those Indians who came to Fiji on their own free will.

Generally it is believed that the Indo-Fijians are better off than the others, both economically and academically. However according to the 1999 *Pacific Human Development Report*, more Indo-Fijians than Fijians live in conditions of poverty. The poorest households usually include people who have little education or skills

and have difficulty getting jobs. They often do not have land or permission to use it. These people suffer from the *poverty of opportunity*[3]. These are the category of people who will be studied.

I will focuss on a rural Indo-Fijian community of 'Wainasasa', who built their life from scratch. They are the *children of girmitiya*, the subjects of this study. (Indo-Fijian in this context refers to the *children of girmitiya* only.)

THE RESEARCH METHODS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The methods adopted in this study were both quantitative and qualitative. However, this study stresses more on an anthropological aspects of human behaviour on emigration. The material for this thesis has been collected in a number of ways and from different sources. For theoretical discussion of emigration and for historical material on Fiji, I relied on secondary sources, mainly articles and books on the subject matter. I also made extensive use of information available on internet. Statistical information was obtained from government publications and newspapers.

For the second more specific primary data, I relied on information derived from the questionnaire survey and observations made during the fieldwork. Close to

[3] This term, which was coined by the late Dr Mabub ul Haq, embraces a lack of education or health, a lack of economic assets or access to markets or jobs that could create them, and various forms of social exclusion or political marginalisation.

300 people live in Wainasasa. A sample of 50 families was picked for the interview.

Participant observation and in-depth informal interview methods were used to supplement the questionnaire surveys. I visited people in their homes to talk to them about Wainasasa.

Unstructured questionnaires were distributed to those I felt could answer well in English. However, I preferred personal encounters with the chosen sample. Face-to-face interviewing provided a strong base for a qualitative research. According to Patton (1980:22):

> *Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions and observed behaviours, direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts, and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories.*

In-depth interviews were also conducted with some fifty individuals from Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. There were many others I could not meet in person especially those in the United States and Canada. They were important subjects in this study because these were the emigrants who initiated the permanent emigration process in the chosen research site. However, I managed to obtain their phone numbers and e-mail addresses which made my research possible.

For a few important informants I mailed questionnaires to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Another technique I employed was casual conversation with prospective emigrants. Casual comments given on the spur of moment provided valuable information for the research.

All my interviews were conducted in Hindi, which made most of the respondents feel at ease. My knowledge of Hindi saved me from the problems of employing an interpreter.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations faced by me were lack of time and money. I could not afford to travel to the United States and Canada to carry out face-to-face interviews with former residents of Wainasasa. However, I did travel to Australia and New Zealand and had first hand experience of the strong former Indo-Fijian community in these two countries. Financial constraints limited the size of the sample, but I managed to obtain some information through telephones, e-mails and written life stories. Frequent reminders had to be given to those who did not respond.

I found a couple of informants a little suspicious of me while conducting the local research. They were not prepared to divulge much information and in a weeks time they left for the United States. (Rumours are that they had obtained their visas through illegal means). Others were cooperative and understood what I was trying to find out. Nevertheless, it is believed that the study provided useful insights into the causes of Indo-Fijian emigration from Fiji. Each research technique applied had its own strengths and weakness, but various applications increased the validity, credibility and knowledge of the study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I had several questions in mind while formulating the hypothesis for this study. For example:

Why are mostly Indo-Fijians emigrating from Fiji?

Where are they going?

What is the volume of Indo-Fijians taking holidays overseas?

Analysing the number of birth, death and marriage news on radios that mention about relatives overseas.

The impact of 'affirmative action' programmes on Indo-Fijians.

Criminal activities committed against Indo-Fijians.

The law and order situation in Fiji.

The validity of the hypothesis that the **'exodus of Indo-Fijians will continue'** will be tested in Wainasasa.

As this hypothesis is rather broad, a number of more specific hypothesis will be tested:

- **How did *girmitiya* turn into settlers, and why did their settlement lead to discrimination, conflict and racism?**
- **What is the effect of settlement on the social structure, culture and national identity of the Fijian society?**
- **What legal, political, economic and social structures and practices exist or emerged to regulate migration and settlement?**
- **What factors provide opportunities for emigrants in the destination area?**
- **How have social networks and other links developed between Fiji and other areas to, provide information, means of travel and possibility of entry to prospective emigrants?**
- **What is the position of former Indo-Fijians in pluralist or multicultural societies?**
- **To what extent has migration led to new linkages between Fiji and the receiving societies?**

ARRANGEMENT OF THESIS

The thesis is divided into six chapters. This chapter has dealt with the purpose, the reasons and importance of the study, the subject of the study, sources and the method applied in the study.

Chapter 2 highlights the theoretical debate on migration. I have discussed the 'Migrations Systems Theory'. The chapter explains the origins and the characteristics of this approach to migration. There are two bodies of thought in the migratory process. First, the theories of migration and settlement and second the theories of ethnic minorities and their position in society. Both the theories are linked to show that the pattern of emigration from Fiji has taken such a direction due to policies adopted by various governments.

Chapter 3 looks the social, economic and political background to emigration. To understand the contemporary trends in emigration a focus on historical events is necessary. It discusses the politics of indenture system and the actions of the colonial government that was largely responsible for making space for Indians in Fiji. It discuses the policies adopted by the Colonial Government a legacy of which is pushing the Indians out of Fiji.

Chapter 4 discusses in detail the emigration trend in Fiji before and after the 1987 coups. Communal differences are critically analysed to show how it

contributes to instability in Fiji, thus causing an ethnic dimension in emigration. It also discusses the level, direction and composition of Indo-Fijian emigration.

Chapter 5 is described as the *local* chapter which provides the background to my study and study area. The theory mentioned in Chapter two is applied to the local scene to provide the bridge between the global and general issues. This importance of the various categories of emigration: independent migration, business migrations, family re-union migration or migrations through marriage.

Finally, in Chapter 6, presents the findings of the research, the conclusions and recommendations arising from this study are explained.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

International migration is a complex issue. It is not an individual action for a person to decide to move in search of better life-chances simply by pulling his or her roots in the place of origin and quickly becoming assimilated in a new country. In fact migration and settlement is a long-drawn process, which will not only affect the migrant's life but affect the subsequent generations too. It is more of a collective action, arising out of social change and affecting the whole society in both sending and receiving areas.

Quite often the original plans to leave are frequently modified or changed as a result of the experience of migration after living in another country. Consequently, the 'emigrant's intentions at the time of departure are poor predictors of actual behaviour' (Castles & Miller, 1998:19). Similarly, for the agents of immigration (for example, the colonial governments) there was no plan to build an ethnically diverse society as it occurred in the case of Fiji. However, for the survival of the capitalist enterprise labour recruitment and more particularly settlement policies often led to the formation of ethnic minorities. These have had far-reaching

consequences for 'social relations, public policies, national identity and international relations' (Castles & Miller, 1998:19).

Migration studies is not a specific social-scientific discipline, but rather an inter-disciplinary field of studies, which uses some aspects of the theory and methodology of nearly all the disciplines: economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, demography, geography and so on. This is because the migratory process itself cannot be neatly divided up into specific components, but instead is a life-long process affecting every aspect of a person's existence. To make things even more confusing, each social science has a range of paradigms (or school of thought) with differing ideas on theory, methods, research logic and objectives of research. In these circumstances, it has not been possible to develop a generally agreed body of theory and methods.

MIGRATION SYSTEMS THEORY

Migration systems theory examines migration in the context of broader macro and micro social processes. The discussion introduces the notion of the migratory process in which migrants go through a number of stages from migration decision making through to settlement and formation of ethnic communities in society.

There are two bodies of thought in the migratory processes: the theories of migration and settlement and the theories on ethnic minorities and their position in society. The aim of the chapter is to link these two theories together initially by looking at the concept of the migratory process and then analysing the theories of ethnicity and racism that leads to an indifferent migration pattern which is the case in Fiji. This would help explain why migration flows start and why those flows persist across space and time.

The migration systems theory perspective places emphasis on international relations, political economy, collective action and institutional factors. These linkages can be categorised as 'state-to-state' relations and comparisons, mass culture connections and family and social networks' (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987:456-7).

The theoretical perspective suggests that migratory movements generally arise from the existence of prior links between sending and receiving countries based on colonisation, political influence, trade investment or cultural ties. For example, massive indentured labour migration from India to Fiji is linked to the British colonial presence on the Indian sub-continent and its colony in Fiji. Similarly, Fiji's contemporary emigration to Pacific rim countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand is largely due to the fact that these countries have been part of the British Empire.

The migrations system approach states that any migratory movement is a result of interacting 'macro' and 'micro' structures.

The Macro-Structures

Macro-structures refer to large-scale institutional factors such as the political economy of the world market, interstate relationships and laws and structures and practices established by the states of sending and receiving countries to control migration settlement.

The indentured migration system was an important macro-structure of the colonial era that contributed to mass migratory movement of people to different parts of the world. Under this system, the indentured workers were transported

'free' to various colonies for a specified number of years to serve the capitalist economy.

A capitalist economy is based on free markets and labour where employers and workers encounter each other as 'free legal subjects, with equal rights to make a contract'. Individual liberty is portrayed as one of the great moral achievements of capitalism. International labour migration is also portrayed as a market in which workers make the free choice to move to the area where they will receive the highest income (Borjas, 1990:9-18). But in reality this does not happen. Cohen (1987) makes a valid point that capitalism has made use of both free and 'unfree' labourers in every phase of its development.

Often labour migrants have been unfree workers. They cannot compete under equal conditions because they are recruited by force or are denied the rights enjoyed by other workers. Indentured colonial labour recruitment also involved bureaucratic control that became highly coercive.

The Micro Structures

The micro-structures embrace the networks, practices and beliefs of the migrants themselves. In other words these are informal social networks developed by the immigrants in order to cope with migration and settlement. 'Informal networks' include personal relationships, family and household patterns,

friendship and community ties and mutual help in economic and social matters. Such links provide vital resources for individuals and groups during the settlement process, which is referred as 'social capital' (Castles and Miller, 1998:24).

Informal networks bind 'migrants and non-migrants together in a complex web of social roles and interpersonal relationships' (Boyd 1989:639). He further clarifies that these bonds have a double-sided effect: they link migrants with non-migrants in their areas of origin and also connect settlers with the receiving populations in relationships of cooperation, competition and even conflict. According to Boyd such networks are dynamic cultural responses, which encourage ethnic community formation and are conducive to the maintenance of transnational family and group ties.

The role of family and community is crucial in migration networks. Research on Asian migration has shown that migration decisions are usually made not by individuals but by families (Hugo, 1994)[4].

Migratory chains are started by external factors and family linkages often provide both the financial and the cultural capital which make migration possible. Once a movement is established, the migrants mainly follow a 'beaten path' (Stahl, 1993), and are helped by relatives and friends already in the area of immigration.

[4] In late 1960s male labour migrants went to New Zealand to work on farms. This decision was normally made by the parents and the children and women were expected to obey patriarchal authority.

Family networks provide shelter, assistance with bureaucratic procedures and support in personal difficulties. Obviously these social networks make the migratory process safer and more manageable for the migrants and their families. Migratory movement, once started, becomes self-sustaining social processes (Castles & Miller, 1998:26).

It is normally seen that social networks become complex in character and some people become facilitators of migration. Harris, (1996:132-6) writes that a 'migration industry' emerges, consisting of recruitment organisation, lawyers, agents, smugglers and other middle-people. The migration industry acts between the micro and macro-structures by linking individual activities to the state and economy that is seen as a 'maso-structure'. Those involved in these activities may be helpers or exploiters[5].

Migration networks gradually lead to settlement and community formation in the immigration area. Migrant groups develop their own social and economic infrastructure: temples, churches, shops, professionals like lawyers and doctors and other services. As the length of stay increases, it becomes difficult for the original migrants to return to their homelands because their children socialize in a different environment and develop bicultural or transcultural identities.

[5] Many prospective migrants have been robbed of their savings in many cases - *Face to face program*, Radio Navtrang 17 August, 2000 (Hindi Program)

The links between immigrant community and area of origin may persist over generations. Although visits home may decline, familial and cultural links remain. Normally people stay in touch with their area of origin, and may seek marriage partners there. Migration continues along the established chains and may increase dramatically at a time of crisis, as was the case after the 1987 coups in Fiji.

Early migrants from *Wainasasa* have maintained familial links. The family bond continues to pull many more from this area. Visits from overseas are widely advertised in this small community. Arranged marriages are still prevalent among Indians in Fiji and marriages are frequently arranged overseas. It was discovered that in crisis situation family members did not hesitate to provide financial assistance and moral support to those in Fiji.

Economic relations may start with import of homeland foods and other products to the immigration area, and export of manufactured goods in the other direction, leading to international business networks. This is clearly evident in the case of *Wainasasa*. Farmers are participating in this international business operation. They export staple Fijian foods like *taro* and *cassava*, and Indian vegetables as well. Not only Indo-Fijians but indigenous Fijians are also are involved in this business. Particularly the indigenous Fijian women are seen as benefiting from exporting river shells (*kai*) from this area.

PROFESSIONAL TRANSIENTS - 'BRAIN DRAIN'

The mobility of highly qualified personnel is the result of the internationalisation of production, trade and finance. Appleyard (1989: 32) has coined the phrase 'professional transients, to refer to executive and professionals sent by their companies to overseas branches or joint ventures, or experts sent overseas by international organisations.

Findlay (1995:515-21) points out, highly skilled temporary migrants are much sought after, even in countries where there is growing hostility to immigration of less-skilled people. Skilled migrants are not an issue of public concern, since they are perceived as bringing economic benefits for the receiving countries, without creating social burdens. Many countries have introduced special entry regulations to facilitate skilled migration.

Some migration of qualified personnel is from less-developed to highly-developed countries: the so-called 'brain drain'. For example, there is a great demand for nurses in public hospitals in New Zealand. The 'brain drain' can represent a serious loss of skilled personnel and training resources from the poorer countries. This is a drain on the resources of the poorer countries, and may lead to bottlenecks in supply of skilled personnel. On the other hand, the remittances of the skilled migrants may be beneficial, and many do return when opportunities become available, bringing with them new experience and sometimes additional training.

Unfortunately many highly skilled migrants find their entry to appropriate employment in highly developed countries restricted by difficulty in securing recognition of their qualification, or by discrimination in hiring and promotion practices. If they fail to get skilled jobs, their migration is both a loss to their countries of origin and a personal disaster.

It is interesting to note from my research that not many emigrants from *Wainasasa* migrate as professional transients. This does not mean that migrants from *Wainasasa* are not trained and educated. The trend adopted by most emigrants is to join family members. This shows the strong family bond that exists within the Indo-Fijian community that has been responsible for 'pulling' others from Fiji.

Macro-structures in relation to Fiji

European colonialism gave rise to various types of migration. One was the large outward movement from India of *indentured labour* migrants to various British colonies.

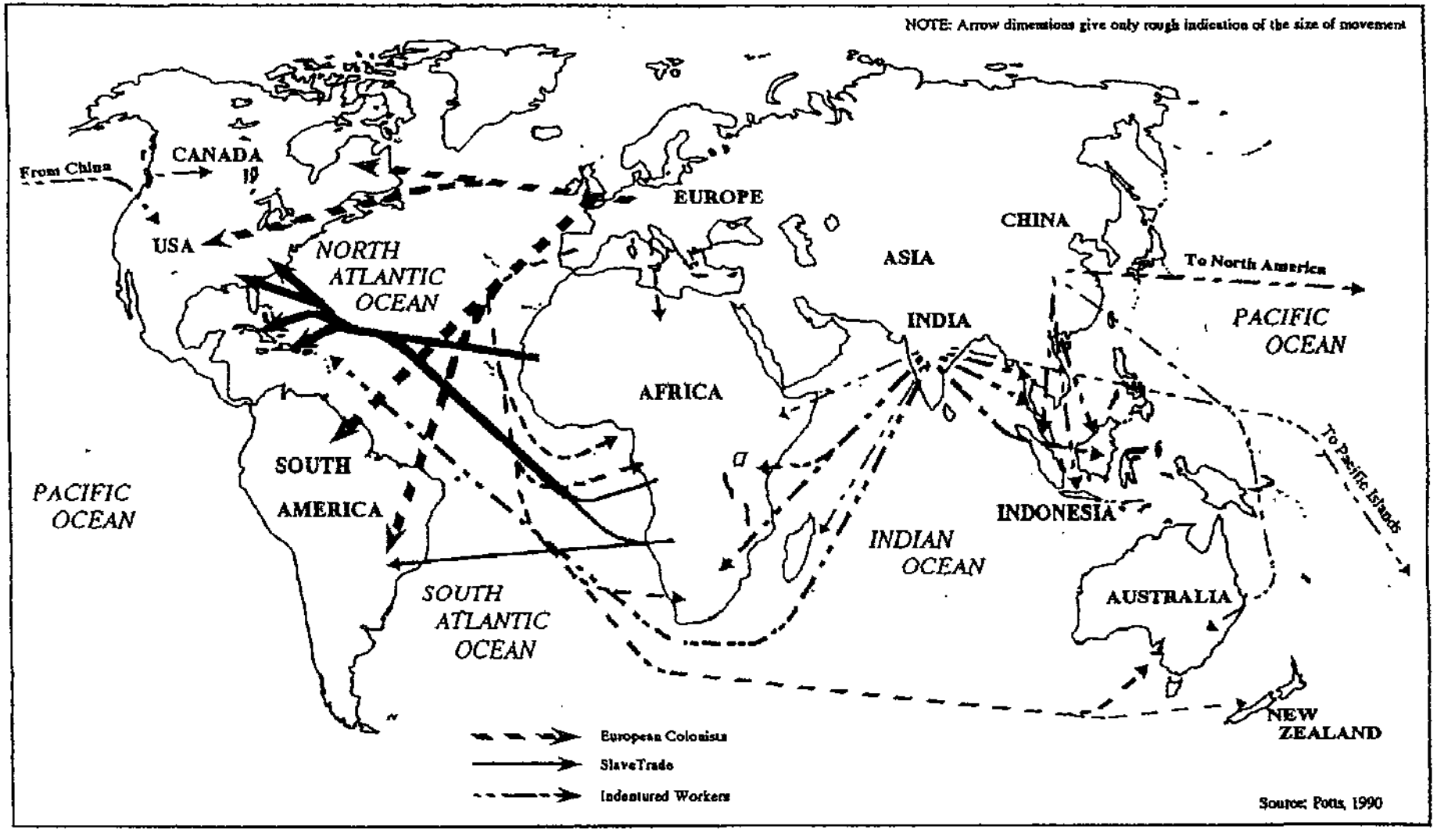
Indentured Workers of Fiji

The introduction of Indians in Fiji was in all respects related to the British taking charge of the islands as a colonial power. Requests for Indian labour by the planters was rejected several times.[6] Fiji is one of several British 'sugar colonies' whose modern history has been shaped by indentured plantation labourers from India. The consequence of this policy has been a segmented society where the descendants of Indian labourers live along side indigenous people without much mixing[7].

[6] Before cession some planters in Fiji had tried to obtain Indian labour. In 1867 F. and W. Hennings made inquiries of the British Consul in Levuka who replied that his government would be unlikely to agree. In 1870 another planter, Nathaniel Chalmers, was refused permission by the Government of India to recruit labour there, but two years later he asked the Cakobau Government to make an official request. This was done, a convention being proposed, but in Calcutta an official wrote about the Cakobau Government: "The experiment is too recent and too strange to warrant the Government of India in confiding in subject "Kakobau Rex" and the Polinesian cotton planters.' The request was politely refused 'at present', but someone in the India Office pencilled 'ever' on his copy (Gillion 1962:3)

[7] In Mauritius, the Indians today form 70 per cent of the total; in Guyana, 51 per cent and in Fiji 42 per cent. In Surinam 35 per cent of Indians form the largest group in a mixed population, while in Trinidad their 40 per cent comprise the second largest group (Robie 1989:203).

Map 2



Colonial migrations from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries

After the abolition of the slave trade in 1834, the indentured workers became the main source of plantation labour for the British colonies. According to Potts (1990:63-103) indentured workers were used in 40 countries by all the major colonial powers. She estimates that the system involved approximately 37 million workers between 1834 and 1941, when indentureship was finally abolished. This diaspora constitutes the largest segment of a trade in indentured labourers. Fiji was caught up in this process and received 69,945 individuals between 1879 and 1916 (Siegal 1985:46).

The organization and control of the plantation labour force were all designed to retard mobility of the labourers. The main advantage of imported labour was that it could be relied on. Emigration was impossible while *girmitiya* was under indenture but movement began once their contracts expired. They moved where they could find land to settle.

Settlement

For most 'freed' Indians the experience of crossing the 'kala pani' and living in Fiji for more than five years led to the modification of their original plans to return to India. This does not mean that they did not return, in fact 40 per cent went back as it appears in Table 2.1 and 2.2.

There was regular repatriation in every year of the indenture period from 1889 to 1920 except 1894 (plague) and 1917-19 (shortage of ships) see Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: DEPARTURES OF INDIANS FROM FIJI (TO 1920)

Year	Number	Year	Number
1881	2	1901	515
1882	4	1902	479
1883	2	1903	579
1884	-	1904	366
1885	10	1905	341
1886	9	1906	351
1887	92	1907	641
1888	119	1908	693
1889	533	1909	414
1890	149	1910	445
1891	427	1911	708
1892	496	1912	719
1893	573	1913	702
1894	1067	1914	1256
1895	608	1915	510
1896	684	1916	678
1897	35	1917	-
1898	413	1918	-
1899	361	1919	-
1900	405	1920	4741

Source: Printed as Appendix J in *Fiji's Indian Migrants* (Gillion 1962:217)

Table 2.2 shows that repatriation continued after indenture.

TABLE 2.2: INDIAN EMIGRATION TRAFFIC

YEAR	DEPARTURES
1926	1180
1927	977
1928	924
1929	546
1930	502
1931	171

Source: Lal, B 1998, *Crossing the Kala Pani* Page 326

Upon completion of indenture, there were several options open to the 'freed' *girmitiya*. They could re-indenture or continue to work for an employer as a free labourer under the Masters and Servants Ordinance; pay their own way back to India or be repatriated at the expense of the government after ten years of residence; take up trade or settle on a plot of land (Gillion 1962:136).

Almost 60 per cent chose to stay back and make Fiji their home. One of the reasons among many was that the government made no real effort to repatriate 'free' Indians to India. The labourers were needed to work the plantations established by the CSR Company for the much-needed revenue that the government depended on. When the Indians resisted working for the oppressive CSR Company, it distributed farm-lots to individuals so the Indians could work independently yet be bound to sell their sugar to the company.

The development of the *Wainasasa* community is traced to this period. Fourteen *girmitiya* became independent farmers whose descendants now occupy most of the area. With the increase in family size and the rise in nuclear family pattern, the land is divided into farm-lots. Only three of this subdivided land has been sold to outsiders after emigration of whole families. Now three indigenous Fijian families live side by side with Indo-Fijians with virtually no tension between them. The rest of the land is still occupied by the *children of girmitiya*. Two properties remain deserted and the owners live overseas. (See Appendix 2)

The Indians settled in Fiji because the colonial government made every effort to retain the Indians. They felt that 'the cost of repatriation was a heavy burden on the colony and therefore, tried on several occasions to restrict the right' (Gillion 1962:191). In 1889, the government advertised that 'the return passages right could be exchanged for a lease of up to five acres of land and goods to the value of twelve pounds per adult and six pounds per child' (Gillion 1962:139).

Later the Government established an Indian Settlement Fund to assist the Indians acquire land. This gave some Indians more incentive to stay on. By 1916, the government played a negotiator's role by liaising with the native Fijians to obtain leases for the Indians. Attractions of this nature were helpful for the land-less, insecure peasants of India and therefore the majority made Fiji their home.

Another reason why they stayed back was because the contract of indenture itself was designed to retain the Indians in Fiji. The immigrants were entitled to a free passage back home only after ten years of residence in Fiji. Their wages were too little to save for the return fares[8]. Gillion writes that those with additional jobs (for example, *Brahmins* with priestly work) could afford to pay their passage back after completion of indenture. After ten year of residence many shared experiences that gave a common bond. The 'roots reach deep in earth' after such a length time it became too difficult for many to pull out.

Policy determined that one woman was to accompany 4 men on each voyage. The Indians were expected to form relationships, raise families and settle permanently in Fiji and continue to serve the capitalist enterprise as labourers. Naturally, many had married in Fiji, and most of these marriages were across caste boundaries. The Indians knew that it would be difficult to secure acceptance in their traditional caste-laden villages in India, so they stayed on in Fiji.

For the women who had escaped patriarchy in India, their shortage increased their demand in Fiji, apparently widowed and divorced women received a better audience in Fiji so chose to remain in Fiji. Others who had experience of floods and famines of the vast Indian continent, loved the greenery and the good tropical weather and made Fiji their home. Few may have delayed their trips and so time passed. All in all the most important reason why they settled in Fiji was that, that there was a government that was offering opportunities entrenched by a promise by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Salisbury who said in 1875:

> *Indian settlers who have completed the terms of service to which they agreed, as the return for the expense of bringing them to the Colonies, will be in all respects free men, with privileges no whit inferior to those of any other class of Her Majesty's subjects resident in the Colonies.*
>
> (*Cited* in Lal 1992:16)

[8] Men received 10 pence and women 9 pence for a day's work. (*See Gillion* for details)

The Fijians no longer were the only inhabitants of the islands, they were now joined by thousands of Indian immigrants whose service as indentured servants entitled them to permanent residence in Fiji. Like the *Deed of Cession*, the Indians believed that the statement by Lord Salisbury was a 'charter of right' in their new home.

Once they decided to stay, the Indians were encouraged to settle in cane producing areas to continue their work as labourers for the sugar industry while the Fijians remained in the villages so that their land could be utilized without 'disturbance'. The settlement pattern did not bring the major races any closer but further separated them. The segregation coupled with a separate linguistic and cultural identity distanced the Indian from the indigenous population.

Colonial policies which ensured economic and political control also fostered other identities such as ethnicity and loyalty to region, thus solutions to one set of problems had planted the seeds of another in contemporary Fiji.

Cultural differences serve as ethnic boundaries. They serve to play a central role in community formation when ethnic groups cluster together to establish their own neighbourhoods. These same neighbourhoods are seen as a threat to the dominant culture and national identity. On the one hand culture is seen as a source of identity but it is also a cause of exclusion and discrimination. In Fiji

Indian culture became highly politicised and become an issue in exclusionary practices against them.

The paternalistic treatment of indigenous Fijians meant that they had a very cordial relationship with the Europeans. But the Indians did not have the same audience and lost their *izzat* (honour) during the rigours of *girmit*. They believed honour could be restored through political rights.

The Indian demand for political rights in return for their contribution to the economy of the colony meant that the Indians were not accorded the same alliance as the Fijians. A British official in 1942 said:

> *The Indian is disliked and feared by Europeans principally because he is politically conscious and is aiming at placing himself on a level with Europeans and is aiming at placing himself on a level with Europeans. The Fijians are superficially a much more attractive people.....and the position of Europeans towards them is roughly that of the guardians of attractive, promising but not yet fully developed children.*
>
> (Tinker 1959:3)

These stereotypes were re-enforced when the Japanese were advancing during the second World War. Fijians responded eagerly to the British call to arms. Indo-Fijians also offered to enlist but only if the pay and conditions were the same as for Europeans. The collective nature of Fijian society provided adequate care for their dependants. Indo-Fijians had no such safety-net.

Their demand was turned down, and they remained virtually bound to their plots. But the sugar workers were affected by war-time prices and they demanded higher pay. When the CSR and the government refused in 1943, the confrontation caused the sugar crops to rot in the canefields. The Indo-Fijians gained nothing except the label of being 'untrustworthy' and 'disloyal'. Significantly it also led to the Royal Fiji Military Forces becoming a Fijian preserve. The image of 'disloyalty' still hounds the Indo-Fijians even after the turn of the century.

However, many Indo-Fijians were recruited as 'labour battalions'. The Indo-Fijians were not prepared fight for the British Empire for a petty pay which had dumped them across the 'kala pani', but they were ready to protect their *maatra bhumi* (birthplace), Fiji. But the war never reached Fiji.

When the war ended, the European-Fijian alliance prospered. Not all Fijians but the chiefs won a permanent place within the Fijian administration. They also tried to consolidate their monopoly on education. Europeans likewise, prospered, diverting much of the colonial development aid towards infra-structural developments linked with tourism investment (Robie 1989:207).

This development pulled many Fijians away from their villages and they became the wage earning class in the modern Fiji. More were pulled away in the mid-

1950s with urban developments that saw the rise of industries. Most chiefs feared they were beginning to lose their traditional hold over people, and of course would have to distribute more of their land rental income to commoner Fijians.

The Indo-Fijian and ethnic Fijian wage earning class came together as trade union movement when a major multiracial strike broke out in 1959. The colonial state crushed the new union movement with the assistance of businessmen and chiefs and set up racially divided unions. 'Race' again was a factor used to divide. Some of the strike leaders (Apisai Tora) became the key figure after the military coups in 1987.

The three coups are usually explained in racial term, leading to the conclusion that the mass exodus of the Indo-Fijian population is more a 'Fijian problem than a racial problem'. According to Professor Yash Ghai, a constitutional advisor on South Pacific affairs:

> *The way to interpret the 1987 coups is not in terms of race but in terms of the Fijian chiefly elite versus Fijian workers.*
>
> (*Cited* in Robie 1989:252)

Robertson and Tamanisau argue *'if Fijians are marginalised, they were marginalised during Fijian rule* (1989:1). For the Fijian economic problems,

Indians became the scapegoat, despite the fact that trans-national business and not Indians dominated the country's economic sectors (*Ibid:*14). The vast majority were working class or cane farmers with income roughly equal to their Fijians counterparts (*ibid:* 1).

Despite Indian presence for over 120 years, they have failed to assimilate with others. Indo-Fijians are considered as alien (*vulagi*) and unwelcome. Most of all, some Fijians feel they have been accommodating Indians all these years.

It appears that accommodation was a feature of Indian relations with Fijians in the past and at present. Indo-Fijians respect the importance of maintenance of paramountcy of Fijian interests because of low level of protest and resistance and an overwhelming desire for return to normal life after political crisis after 1987 and 2000 coups. This explains why immediately after the coups a kind of fatalism enveloped many Indo-Fijians; they talked not of struggle, but of emigration.

South Pacific Work Permit Scheme

The people from the Pacific mainly emigrate permanently to the Pacific-rim developed countries of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of

America. For the Fijian emigrants during the 1970s and 1980s, Australia and New Zealand have been the main countries of destination (Connell 1986; Bedford and Gibson 1986).

Bedford (1986:183) maintains that 'a distinctive dimension to population movement between Fiji and New Zealand since the early 1960s has been a temporary work-permit scheme' called the *South Pacific Work Permit Scheme*. Bedford noted that the military coups of 1987 dramatically changed the emigration pattern in Fiji. There was a sharp rise in the demand for permanent and visitors visas from the Indo-Fijians. There was danger of people cheating the South Pacific Work Permit Scheme and the New Zealand immigration officials shelved the scheme for Fiji in September 1987 after the second military coup (Brake 1993:177).

The exposure to Indo-Fijians to New Zealand with the implementation of the government to government level 'macro-structure' of South Pacific Work Permit Scheme' was important in relation to the contemporary emigration trend. (This is further discussed in the next chapter).

Another short-term labour scheme was implemented in New Zealand during the 1980s arose from the demand for 'halal' slaughter in the meat industry. Development of lamb export markets in the Middle East was contingent upon certain slaughtering procedures being performed by practising Muslims.

Problems were encountered in arranging suitable Iranian labour and the proximity to New Zealand of a sizable supply of willing and acceptable Muslim workers made the seasonal employment of Muslim Fiji Indians a practical solution (Levick & Bedford, 1988:15).

After the coups of 1987 and 2000 there has been a growing number of advertisements in the local dailies who offer to assist individuals to assist in migration matters. A 'migration industry' has emerged, consisting of recruitment organisation, lawyers, agents, smugglers and other middle-people. Such an advertisement is shown below.

NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS LTD

To those persons with good educational qualifications or business skills interested in emigrating.

Ron Moncur will be visiting Fiji and available for appointments at the Hotels and only during those dates stated below.

Sheraton (Fiji) Resort
13th to 20th April
Telephone 750 777

Grand Eastern Hotel, Labasa
21st-26th April
Telephone: 811 022
Po Box 138, Westpark, Auckland
New Zealand
Tele/Fax.64 9 416 9192
E-mail: nzic@topservice.com

Micro Structures in relation to Fiji

The micro social structures involve the family, friendship and community networks.

'Chain migration' especially in relation to family migration has been very important for Indo-Fijians. Family members have eagerly been sponsored. In some cases convenience marriages have been secretly arranged sometimes within the family for even with individuals of different ethnic groups. In a few cases, large sums of money have been deposited to enable family members to emigrate on business grounds (personal knowledge). Family members overseas have also assisted students as boarders. Family members have consistently arranged job offer letters.

Sort-term skilled migrants also went to other Pacific Islands as labour migrants. These temporary emigrants did not come under a bureaucracy and could be categorised as a micro-structure. Most of these labourers returned home, but few did become permanent settlers.

Community networks have involved mostly the migration of religious preachers e.g. priests, where petitions have been sent to embassies that they are required by the re-settled communities.

Summary

Macro and micro-structures are linked at all levels during the migratory process. It is very important to realise the distinctions between the various types of migrations. Labour migrants, permanent settlers and refugees move under different conditions and have varying motivations.

Colonialism, industrialization and integration into the world economy destroy traditional forms of production and social relations and lead to reshaping of nations and states. Such societal changes lead both to economically motivated migration and to politically motivated flight (Castles & Miller, 1998:29). It is easy to relate the two bodies of thought (migration and settlement) in the case of Fiji.

While the macro-structure of indentured migration led to settlement of the majority of the emigrants, very few labourers of short-term South Pacific Work Permit Scheme settled in New Zealand. But the SPWPS provided the finance to hundred of Indo-Fijians to settle elsewhere which built the micro-structure and is now pulling thousands Indo-Fijians as 'chain' migrants.

The next chapter discusses the social, economic and political background to emigration. Post and pre-coup emigration trend is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO EMIGRATION FROM FIJI

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will analyse the relevance of migration theory in the context of Fiji. The last chapter dealt in some detail with the theoretical dimensions of the concept of migration.

Various approaches have been taken by scholars of different disciplines to describe and analyze migration patterns in Fiji. By considering their efforts a better understanding may be gained of the usefulness of this perspective, that is its strengths and weaknesses.

In discussing these works I will put forward my own interpretation of materials used by them, emphasizing the need to understand Indo-Fijian emigration considering social, cultural, economic and political factors affecting them in Fiji.

FIJI LOSSES THROUGH EMIGRATION

Scholars who have utilized the concept of emigration to explain dynamic population changes in Fiji may be grouped into three categories. The first category would include such names as Jones and Connell. They studied emigration prior to the 1987 coups.

The second category would include names like Geddes, Bedford, Forsyth, Chetty and Prasad and Naidu. These scholars have studied post-coup emigration from Fiji.

The third category that contributed to the literature on migration from Fiji includes studies of Fijian emigrants in their new homes. Buchignani studied the process of Fijian migration to Canada and their experience in the host society. Another work on host society was done in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Immigration Multicultural and Population Research Committee compiled a community profile on Fiji born people.

PRE-COUP EMIGRATION

In Fiji, emigration has not received the scholarly attention that it has received in other countries. Nor has it been a concern for the different governments. Fijian governments have taken an indifferent attitude towards emigration, that is neither they are promoting it or stopping it.

Perhaps the governments' silence could be viewed considering the unemployment situation in the 1960s and 1980s. During these decades a stagnant economic environment was unable to absorb the constant stream of graduates and skilled personnel vying to join the workforce[9]. Consequently in 1984, the *Fiji Employment and Development Mission* (1984: 31-37) recommended to the ruling Alliance Government that it support a given level of migration across all occupational groups. Emigration was to help siphon off a considerable part of the already employed labour force and make space for the new entrants in the labour market.

Another reason for the governments' silence on emigration could be that, it was concentrating on indigenous Fijian development and since the most who emigrated were Indo-Fijians, it was not a concern for the government. Indo-Fijian

[9] *Youth unemployment in urban areas was as high as 25 per cent* (Cameron 1987 'Fiji: The Political Economy of Recent Events' in *Capital & Class 33* (Winter): 29-45)

emigration helped to fill in vacant positions in public and private sectors by indigenous Fijians.

Jones carried out the first detailed academic study on emigration from Fiji in 1976. She used migration cards to manually analyze aspects of emigration to complete a major research paper for her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of the South Pacific. She sought to explain the causes of migration in relation to their age and ethnicity (Jones 1976:1)

In a significant finding Jones reported that the majority of emigrants were Indo-Fijians (Jones 1976:28) and about one-half of the emigrants originated from Suva, the capital (Jones 1976:22). Jones found that emigration 'take-off' was *between 1966-1969, the average annual net migration (difference between arrivals/departures of residents) rising to 855* (Jones 1976:9). The rate of emigration increased sharply, immediately after independence reaching a peak in 1975. Jones also found that the majority of emigrants were young, either young married couples, students or the children of older migrants (Jones 1976:21).

Jones (1976:7) discovered that:

> *The most noticeable trend with regard to volume of migration is the steady increase, especially since 1968, residents leaving the country and returning. The greater mobility is undoubtedly related to higher socio-economic standards of living and therefore the financial means of travel. Greater knowledge of the*

> *world outside. Fiji through modern means of communication has also awakened in many people the desire to travel. People are thus more aware of opportunities for more permanent migration. Most residents, however, were travelling abroad, probably for the purpose of education, business or vacation but returning at the end of the year.*

Bedford's (1988:183) study showed that *'a distinctive dimension to population movement between Fiji and New Zealand since the early 1960s has been a temporary work-permit scheme called the 'South Pacific Work Permit Scheme'.* This scheme was an arrangement between the New Zealand and Fiji Governments. The Fijian authorities requested that the following restrictions be imposed:

- The workers were restricted to employment in rural areas
- Work permits were issued for a maximum of four months
- Workers were required to spend 12 months back in Fiji before qualifying for another period of temporary employment

Bedford says that the primary concern of the Fiji Department of Labour was that workers should be encouraged to save as much of their earnings in New Zealand as possible. A short period of employment in a rural environment was considered to be much more conducive to a lengthy period of work in town. In order to spread the opportunity for earning much higher wages than those paid in Fiji and to prevent undue disruptions caused by absences from family and other

responsibilities in rural communities, the period of work in New Zealand was to be kept short.

The responsibility of selecting workers to go to New Zealand under the terms of the scheme lay with the Department of Labour in Suva. Workers were expected to bring back money for investment in housing, village works projects, business ventures and education. While Jones found out in her analysis that most emigrants were *'returning at the end of the year'* she completely forgets about the large number of short-term labour migrants who were also returning home after the completion of their term. She only says that *'those returning to Fiji went for the purpose of education, business or as tourists'.*

Hundreds of emigrates from Fiji were emigrating as short-term labour migrants under the *South Pacific Work Permit Scheme*. Most of whom were Indo-Fijians. However, she noted that the year 1968 *'marked the beginning of the high rate of Indian emigration'* (Jones 1976:9). Levick and Bedford (1988:14) wrote in their paper 'Fiji Labour Migration to New Zealand':

> *The only country from which workers have come consistently to work on contract to New Zealand under the terms of the South Pacific Work Permit Scheme, is Fiji. One reason for this can be found in the tradition of employment in rural areas rather than towns which has differentiated schemes developed for Fijians and Fiji Indians since the late 1960's.*

Jones' analysis that *'the greater mobility is undoubtedly related to higher socio-economic standards of living and therefore the financial means of travel'* is not true for most early Indo-Fijian emigrants. Both economically and politically this was a difficult period for them.

It is very interesting to note from Jones' analysis that most of the emigrants originated from the eastern part of *Viti Levu*. *'Nausori has provided by far the largest number of Indian emigrants' in late 1960s and early 1970s'* (Jones 1976:31). In *Wainasasa*, not a single household was left that did not send a young man to work in New Zealand. Chapter five of this thesis records the economic difficulties the Indo-Fijian community was facing during that period that was the major 'push' factor in their emigration.

At this point it is necessary to discuss why economic hardships arose that caused a large scale movement of people. I will particularly focus on economic and political conditions in Nausori area to argue that most Indo-Fijian emigrants were not emigrating for the purpose of business and tourism as stated by Jones but were emigrating as a result of the economic and political insecurities.

From 1880 until 1959 the most important economic activity on the eastern part of Fiji was sugar production. At the request of the Governor Gordon the Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Australia (CSR) established its first large mill on the banks on the *Rewa River* in 1881. This saw the establishment of *Nausori* town, approximately 15 kilometres from the capital city Suva.

The CSR and the growers constituted the sugar industry in Fiji. From 1883 sugar became Fiji's main export. Consequently the CSR controlled the industry from 1882 to 1973 and there was little government supervision or participation except through the taxes. The government was so dependent on the company that a governor wrote to the Colonial Secretary in 1920, that *'over half Fiji hangs in the shadow of the company'* (Robie 1989: 204).

The marriage between the company and government was described by the labourers as 'a tyrannical *sasu'* (mother-in-law) for the CSR and 'dutiful *bahu*' (daughter-in-law) for the colonial government. It is a traditional Indian sentiment that *sasu (sas)* and *bahu (patoh)* are meant to be at loggerheads. Rarely would they come together. But if they do come together, they will destroy the household[10]. This rare occasion arose under the system of indenture. The Indians believed that the government and the company came together and destroyed the Indian community.

[10] This concept is displayed in an Indian saying *'Sas patoh jab ek hoi jae hai to ghar barbad kar de hai'.*

Writers on the indenture system in Fiji, K.L Gillion (1962), Hugh Tinker (1974), Vijay Naidu (1979), Ahmed Ali (1979) and Walter Gill (1979) all agreed on its harshness and one need not give here lengthy details about the nature of the evil.

The plantation system represented a complete breakdown of the Indian value system. There was a high rate of sexual violence and other brutality, disrupted family life and suicides. The abuses that had crept in during indenture remained unchecked and the colonial government turned a blind eye to the labourer's plight. The labourers had emigrated from India in order to improve their economic and social conditions. They had hoped to do this within the context of their traditional values, especially within their religion.

Religious marriage is an important stabilizing factor in Indian society, this was not recognized by the authorities. The policy of recruiting thirty women to every hundred men did not necessarily mean that the minimum quota was fulfilled. The disproportion between the sexes became one of the major causes of conflict. Single men lived alongside married couples in cramped barracks in sugar plantations. Their rooms measured ten feet by seven feet rooms with partitions reaching three-quarters of the way to the ceiling. Labour conditions were harsh and excessive tasking led to the general breakdown in social conditions of labourers.

The *girmitiya* had little alternative but to satisfy the demand of the employers. As Indo-Fijian labourers ended their *girmit* contracts, they were no longer prepared

to work for the Company. The sugar plantations were eventually carved up into plots leased by Indo-Fijian small planters. But they remained dependent as they were forced to sell their cane to the CSR on company terms.

In the 1930s Fiji was beset by drought and economic difficulties brought about by the Great Depression. Many farmers incurred a lot of debt during this period and struggled to survive. The sugar industry once again came under threat as the second World War approached. For the Indo-Fijians, the war was a turning point as their visions widened economically and their expectations increased. They realised that cash income could be obtained in other employment as well, however sugar cultivation remained as a dominant income earner.

Under these difficult conditions there were talks of closure of the sugar mill after the second world war ended. Officials believed that excessive rain made the south eastern part of *Viti Levu* no longer viable for the sugar industry. The CSR finally did close its Nausori mill in 1959 without giving much regard to the hundreds of people who depended so much on the sugar industry.

Sugar production was the 'life and blood' for the Indo-Fijians and the mill's closure spread havoc in the community. Most people were still in debt at that time. The insecurity of their ancestors, weighed upon the first generation of Indians as well. It was this desperate economic condition that was the major 'push' factor which saw the large-scale emigration of Indo-Fijians in the 1960's.

Certainly there may have been few who could have emigrated due to higher socio-economic standards as Jones says, but most of my respondents informed me that they borrowed money from money-lenders to emigrate in search of work. The *macro-structure* of SPWPS of New Zealand provided such an opportunity for thousands of young Indo-Fijian males. For the *children of girmitiya* this intial movement became an important feature of contemporary emigration from Fiji.

Political Dimension

Indo-Fijian emigration did not only begin as a result of economic insecurity but politics also affected their life. Politically the 1960s was an important period for them. Constitutional changes during this period, which eventually led to independence for Fiji in 1970, were marked by the continual defeat of Indian claims for greater representation in parliament and elections based on common roll.

In 1966, a new constitution was introduced by the British in Fiji. It provided for a ministerial form of government, with an almost wholly elected Legislative council. The British had adopted a system of communal rolls that meant to divide the people into separate electorates on the basis of their ethnic groups. The division imposed by the *native policy* was now legally entrenched in the new constitution.

Although numerically the Indian population was more, the British regarded the electoral system of separate communal electoral for the different ethnic groups with an indigenous advantage as vital.

1970 Constitution

After exactly 96 years of British rule, Fiji became independent on 10 October 1970 and inherited the British parliamentary system of government. The 1970 constitution was accepted through compromises and dialogue after a prolonged discussion in London. The Queen was the head of state, who was represented by a Governor General. The legislature consisted of a Senate and a 52 member House of Representatives. (See figure 3.1)

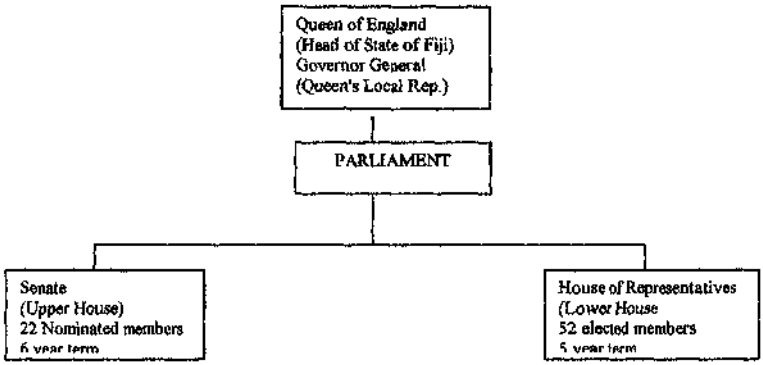
While departing the colonial government fulfilled its promise of paramountcy of indigenous interests as promised by Sir Hercules Robinson, by leaving Fiji in Fijian hands. The constitution recognized the special position of indigenous Fijians especially in regards to land and fishing rights. Any laws regarding indigenous rights would require the vote of three quarters of the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

As for the Indo-Fijians, who had been brought initially as indentured labourers but with the promises of 'enjoyment of equal rights', under the Salisbury dispatch, their future was transferred without any special legal provisions.

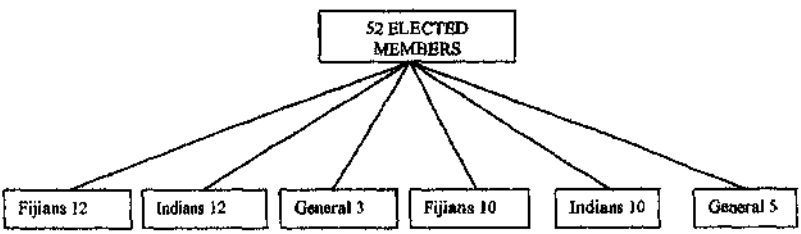
Following the system of communal electoral roll before independence, the same pattern continued after independence. Under this condition, it was absolutely impossible to achieve a reasonable basis for representation based on majority rule. But the British in the guise of protecting the Fijian interests carried it out. The Indian demand for 'common roll' - one man one vote, since 1929 - was rejected based on the fear that the numerically and economically strong Indians may dominate. Thus ultimately the Indians had to accept the system of communal role in order to allay the Fijian fears of Indian domination.

Representation was under a rigid communal electoral system that assured the Fijians 22 seats, the Indo-Fijians 22 seats and others 8. Fijian interests were protected particularly when the membership of the Senate was made up to 22 members appointed by the Governor General: 8 on the advice of the Governor General, 7 on the advice of the Prime Minister, 6 on the advice of the Leader of Opposition and 1 on the advice of Council of Rotuma. (See figure 3.1)

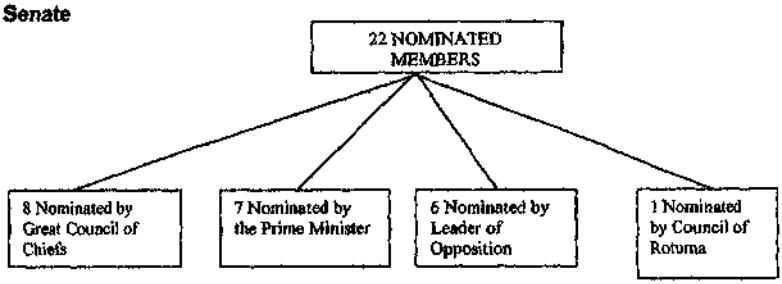
Figure 3.1: House of Representatives under the 1970 Constitution



House of Representatives Composition



Senate



'Parity' of ethnic representation under the constitution was outweighed by defence of Fijians interests. Therefore, parity did not mean equality but the Indo-Fijians co-operated with ethnic Fijians to create a stable society. A Minority rights Group researcher Naresha Duraiswamy explained why the Indian dominated National Federation Party compromised at the Marlborough House Conference in London during the independence talks *(Reprinted in* Robie 1989:209):

> *The Indians, who were very active in the movement for independence, settled for the communal rolls and weighted representation favouring the natives in return for stability and a chance to protect their interests through Westminster-style politics. The native Fijians, anxious to avoid the fate that befell many other indigenous people of the Pacific and the New World, were satisfied at the constitutional arrangements which safeguarded their interests in the electoral system and in the ownership of land.*

After independence the ruling Alliance party vigorously concentrated on indigenous Fijian development. The Indo-Fijian community felt disenchanted with the logic of a communal electoral system and felt excluded and marginalised in national decision making process of the country. The leading figures in the Indian Alliance, Sir Vijay Singh, James Shankar Singh, MT Khan and others left the party, complaining of 'step brotherly approach'. Former Alliance minister, James Shankar Singh (The *Fiji Times*, 18 January 1982) bluntly said:

> *It is my sad experience throughout the existence of the party that Indian Alliance leaders and members have merely been made tools or vehicles of convenience by the party leader, and once the general election is over and Ratu Sir Kamisese (Mara) conveniently seated in the Prime Minister's chair, he treats them like a bunch of coolies.*

Indo-Fijians at that time were also coming to terms with the calls by the nationalist politician, Sakiasi Butadroka, to repatriate Indians to India. They were reviewing the cases of anti-Indian legislation in Uganda which eventually led to their expulsion. The Indians in Fiji were asking whether this could happen here. The fear of insecurity was creeping in and those who could escape were moving for a better future for their children.

Jones also notes the large-scale migration of Europeans and says '*whether or not the fear of Indian demands (for independence) caused the large-scale exodus of Europeans that year, is difficult to determine*' (Jones 1976:11). If Jones' analysis is correct than the European fear and their consequent flight from Fiji may have been considered by the British when they decided to pass power into native Fijian hands.

The Indians in Fiji had expected independence would provide them with equality British colonialism had promised and denied. Independence they believed would grant them the position colonialism had denied them as a community. They were mistaken. However, the 1970 constitution guaranteed free and unimpeded

movement of Fiji citizens and Jones proved her point with statistics when she said (1976:12-13):

> *In 1967, in which independence was approved by the Great Council of Chiefs, marked the beginning of considerable Indian movement which is today one of the most outstanding characteristics of the current pattern of migration.*

The following article shows that the economic and political situation was so difficult in the 1960s that people tried to emigrate through whichever means they could find. In this unusual case, a woman tried to escape to England. Normally Indian women are not so mobile and the conditions certainly may have been hard within which she decided to move.

Source: *Fiji Times*, 7 July 1965

FIJI-INDIAN GIRL DEPORTED

An Indian girl from Fiji was deported from Britain yesterday less than 24 hours after she had arrived at Southampton.

The girl, Miss Sashi Kara, arrived at Southampton in the Shaw Savill liner Northern Star and was refused permission to land. She spent the night on board the Northern Star, under guard, and was taken by immigration officers to London Airport to catch a flight home. The immigration authorities at Southampton refused to disclose why Miss Kara had been refused permission to land. Later a Home Office spokesmen said it was because she did not qualify for residence in Britain.

The second study on Fiji's emigration was undertaken by Connell in 1985 prior to the 1987 coups was part of a wider study of *'Migration, Employment and Development in the South Pacific'*. Connell's work brought into focus the historical discussion of emigration. While he has discussed Pacific migration patterns very widely in his writings he raised an important point that Indo-Fijians were also going to far away places like United States and Canada. Connell (1985:48) wrote:

> *For more than a decade, emigration from Fiji has had enormous significance and especially the emigration of Indians mainly to North America (primarily to Canada)*

Jones had already identified the direction when she analysed the 1975 emigration data. She said (1976:44):

> *It is rather surprising to notice that the countries of greatest immigration are those which are furthest from Fiji, both geographically and culturally. However, both Canada and the United States already have comparatively large populations and an expanding economy which is big enough to absorb large number of immigrants. Australia and New Zealand and other Pacific Islands, though closer geographically and culturally, offer fewer occupational opportunities, and would also seem to have more stringent immigration laws.....Almost three quarters of the migrants were Indians....Although age data was not available, a fairly balanced sex ration would tend to indicate movement of married people and families, especially to Canada.*

I further argue that the exposure of Indians to the short-term labour migration to New Zealand and in some cases Australia provided the financial means to travel to Canada and the United States. There are two reasons for the change in destination. First, immigration especially to New Zealand became a critical political issue in 1975. (This is further discussed later). Second, the short-term labour scheme became highly corrupt as shown in the following article. Therefore, it was easier to go Canada and the United States who were openly welcoming emigrants.

Source: Fiji Times,16 July 1965

FORGED PASSPORTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Dewan Chand (s/o Ram Pal), aged 24, used a forged passport to get into New Zealand because his wife and child were there, the Acting Senior Magistrate (Mr Moti Tikaram) was told yesterday at the Suva Court. Narayan Sami (s/o Velu) told the court that he had used a forged passport to land because he was in love with a girl in New Zealand. *The men were charged with being in possession of forged passports. Mr Tikaram fined them thirty pounds each, default two months' gaol, and ordered them to pay one pound costs, in default seven days. They were also bound over in the sum of one hundred pounds for two years, in default three months.* In respect of Chand, who pleaded guilty, Inspector Puran said that in 1961 he went to New Zealand. Having spent three months there, he came back to Fiji in 1962. In 1962 he went back to New Zealand and remained there till this year.

CAUGHT AND DEPORTED He had stayed in New Zealand almost two years after his permit expired. He was caught and deported to Fiji on January 18. Between March 1 and March 9, Chand met some of his friendsand received information that a certain man working at Burns Philps - who had since been dealt with by Mr Tikaram - arranged for landing permits on payment of five pounds to ten pounds. He went to this clerk, said Inspector Puran, and gave him his passport. He was told to return in three or four days.

ENTRY VISA When he called back he received his passport. On the seventh page he saw a visa for entry into New Zealand, which was endorsed. Inspector Puran said that Chand knew the seventh page did not belong to the passport. He also knew that he had overstayed his time in New Zealand. He had been made aware that he would not be granted a permit for New Zealand. Chand produced the passport at Nadi and went to New Zealand. On his arrival in New Zealand it was accepted as genuine. Chand arrived back in the colony on Tuesday, said Inspector Puran.

SENTENCED IN NZ Chand told the court he was sentenced to a month in New Zealand and was ordered to be deported. Inspector Puran said the sentence for the offence was a fine not exceeding two hundred pounds. Chand said he was married in December last year and was deported last January. When he was deported the court knew he was married. He said his wife was part-European and part-Maori. They had a child.

MAIN REASON Answering the Magistrate, Chand said his main reason for going back to New Zealand was because his wife and child were there. While he was in New Zealand he supported his wife and child. He asked to be fined. He said he had not applied for his wife to come to Fiji and Mr Tikaram told him that this was the proper thing to do.His passport had cost him five pounds. Sentencing him, Mr Tikaram said Chand had a desire to see his wife and child.

GREAT TEMPTATION It must have been a great temptation to him to obtain a passport with a false permit for five pounds, he said. On the other hand, he was

Connell also discussed the significant skills losses from emigration surveying the consequences of movements. Connell (1985:53) says:

> *The most striking conclusion on the impact of international migration from Fiji is that it constituted a very substantial skill and brain drain.*

Jones (1976:50) as well discussed the depletion on the ground of skilled category, but she admits that:

> *The skilled categories cross-cut several old ones, eg. No. 4 sales workers includes top level management personnel as well as persons who are semi-skilled or unskilled. The same applies to No. 6 agricultural workers which includes highly trained agricultural scientists as well as subsistence farmers. Thus in some respects it will be difficult to determine as precisely as with the former categories, various levels of skilled manpower.....*

In regards to skilled emigration of Indo-Fijians in 1960s and early 1970s, I would place them as construction workers, mechanics, ordinary office workers, drivers etc. without specialised training. During this time not many Indo-Fijians were highly educated to cause a 'drain drain' in Fiji. As Jones has noted there was a large number of Europeans who were also emigrating at that time. Connell's analysis on 'brain drain' would have included these Europeans. Those Indo-Fijians who were highly educated would not have considered emigrating because

they were filling in the posts vacated by Europeans. 'Brain drain' in relation to Indo-Fijians, appears to have actually started in late 1970s and early 1980s. By this time many Indo-Fijians were highly educated and they were becoming sensitive to the calls by nationalist to repatriate Indian and also understanding matters relating to land.

During the 1960's, countries like Australia and New Zealand were not too interested on skilled workers because they were still concentrating on rural development after the wars. For this kind of work labourers were needed. It should also be noted that a high number of Australian and New Zealanders were also returning home (Jones 1976:13) and they may have been counted by Jones as skilled emigrants.

Since Australia and New Zealand did not require skilled workers in the 1960s and early 1970s, some Indo-Fijians went to other Pacific islands as skilled labour migrants. For example, Indo-Fijian labour migration to New Hebrides began in 1959 when hurricane struck severely damaging crops and buildings. In Vila, Burns Philp (SS) Company Limited was one of the victims of this disaster and Narayan Construction Company of Suva (owned by a descendant of *girmitiya*) won a tender to repair and reconstruct some of their buildings. In 1960, about thirty Indo-Fijian tradesmen arrived in Vila. (See table 3.1)

Most of the Indo-Fijians emigrants were from Suva and Nausori sub-urban areas. Their economic background was centered on small-scale cash crop farming. But their income was supplemented by skilled jobs and most had no specialised training (*Pacific Indians* 1981:37). Their emigration was triggered because there was little sustained improvement in the economic position of farmers (Oral source in *Wainasasa*).

Table 3.1: Indo-Fijian Labour Migration to New Hebrides

Year	1 Year	2 Years	Total
1965	-	1	1
1966	3	3	6
1967	6	1	7
1968	7	3	10
1969	25	5	30
1970	21	4	25
1971	72	6	78
1972	96	8	104
1973	87	5	91
1974	57	6	64
1975	6	1	7
1976	7	-	7
1977	4	1	5
1978	-	1	1

Source: Pacific Indian 1981:36 (The rise in migration between 1971 to 1973 was due to a boom in the New Hebridean construction industry.

Similarly in Solomon Islands semi-skilled Indo-Fijian tradesmen arrived in the last phase of the country's colonial period. The following biographical notes show their skills.

Figure 3.2: The Fiji-Indian Community in Solomon Islands

Arrivals – early 1950s
Jim Chottu – Mechanic, married Solomon Islander, still resident in SI
Lal Singh – Mechanic, departed SI 1975 for Australia
Jai Singh – Mechanic, departed SI 1970 and returned to Fiji
Sami Mala – Plumber, departed SI 1978 and returned to Fiji
Mahabir Prakesh – Mechanic, still resident in SI: married to Fiji Indian

Arrivals – late 1950s
Ram Dhari – Plumber, self employed in business in *Gizo*, married to local

Arrivals – early 1960s
Hari Chandra – Plumber, *returned to Fiji*, 1974
Moses Razak – Tradesman, married to Solomon Islander, still resident in SI
Guru Prasad – Plumber, returned to Fiji 1974

Arrivals – mid to late 1960s
Abdul Mazid – Plumber, self-employed, *returned to Fiji* 1977
Narayan Satya – Cook, married to Fiji Indian, present in SI
Mahendra Singh – Carpenter, married to Fiji Indian, departed for Australia 1976
Inder Dutt – Carpenter, married to Fiji-Indian, still resident in SI
Hari Narayan – Joiner, married to Gilbertese, still resident in SI
Ram Chandra – Mechanic, *married to Fiji Indian, still resident in SI*
Ram Achal – Plasterer, married to Fiji Indian, still in SI
Mohammed Taj Ibnul – Plumber, married to a local, still in SI
Source: Pacific Indian 1981:61

Both these countries later disallowed Indo-Fijians from engaging in business after viewing the situation in Fiji where very few native Fijians owned business. This pressure was obviously not attractive to an Indian settler and most emigrants returned to Fiji.

A number of young men from *Wainasasa* went to New Hebrides and Solomon Islands, they all came back after completion of work in these two countries.

POST-COUP (1987) EMIGRATION

After the 1987 coups, I found the first paper on emigration from Fiji written by Geddes. He (1987/88) argues that Indo-Fijians emigrate for material benefits.

> *In understanding the pattern of migration account must be taken of the very different social backgrounds of Indo-Fijian and indigenous Fijians. Indo-Fijians were brought to Fiji as individuals, without long established social groups within which they could be placed. From the outset, they were out of necessity, fully involved in the cash economy. They were either employed for wages or were required to be involved in serious cash cropping, often with very low rates of return forcing long hours and a strong emphasis on earning cash. This resulted in a strong bias toward material success in the cash economy as a means to material and social self-improvement. The communities which evolved in Fiji through the twentieth century had, as one of the important reasons for their existence, the material advancement of their members. The post-war emigration of Indo-Fijians retain links with their immediate families in Fiji, but their emigration is seen by all involved as the achievement of increased material well-being. Emigration fits into the overall objectives of the Indo-Fijian population as a further means of attaining to what almost all Indo-Fijians have grown up to believe is an important aim in life —to improve the material standing of the family.*

This argument is flawed. I do not dispute that emigration is triggered by a perception that it would lead to an improvement of the material life-chances of the individual. In fact this is a universal trend anyway. Mitchell (1959:32) while writing on the causes of labour migration says:

> *In logical terms, economic factors appear to be a necessary condition, but they may not in themselves be a sufficient condition. In other words, if the economic drives to labour migration are not present it is unlikely that it will occur, but if the economic conditions are present, the actual migration may not occur until some event in the personal life of the individual precipitates events and triggers off his decision to go (Mitchell 1959:32)*

One cannot dispute that many Indians came as individuals from India to work. The Indians were torn away from their social groups by the British activities in India so that they could come to serve the capitalist system without any bonds. However, 40 per cent returned despite being disturbed socially especially in relation to their all important social division of *caste* that disintegrated in the immigration process[11]. Whether they found acceptance in India upon their return is beyond the scope of this paper.

But for those who settled in Fiji they formed strong community bonds and raised families. Though most Indo-Fijians live as nuclear family but their immediate family and their community as a whole is important as well. Because of this attachment Indo-Fijian emigration has not stopped ever since it started. In a crisis situation their group ties get stronger and their desire to assist in the emigration process is increased.

[11] For the Indo-Fijians, the extremely hard conditions of indenture quickly led to a collapse of their all important *caste* prohibitions resulting in a levelling of cultural differences between those of different class and regional backgrounds (Jayawardena, 1971), thus clearing the way for a specifically Fiji Indian identity.

Geddes completely ignores the fact that the British did not create the same environment for the Indian settlers in Fiji as they did for indentured Indian workers in Mauritius, Trinidad and Guyana. With regards to land ownership the Indians and their children were to reside in Fiji at the mercy of their Fijian landlords.

Opportunities for employment are eroding away for the Indo-Fijians as the government pressures for affirmative action programs for the Fijians and Rotumans. These factors should not be ignored while studying the emigration trends in Fiji.

Socio-Cultural Atmosphere

There are obvious differences in cultural, social and economic activities between the two major races. The colonial government physically separated the Indian and Fijian population. Consequently interaction between races among the general population remains slight.

As a result the majority of Fijians, approximately 60 per cent still live in a rural or village environment. They have little contact with the large numbers of cane farmers and other Indo-Fijians.

The colonial inspired, forceful entry of Indians into cash crop sugar farming eventually saw them enter the expanding urban economy. They have been participating in the cash economy for more than half a century, during which period they were left virtually on their own resources by the colonial government.

Most have done quite well which improved their social standing. This has only been achieved by working independently under difficult circumstances. It is not surprising that Indo-Fijians regard themselves as strong followers of the principles of the Max Weber's 'Protestant Ethic'. This training has also seen them succeed when they emigrate to other countries as well.

However stereotypic views are held against them by indigenous Fijians, as Lal (1988a:59) described, *'they regard the Indians as pushy and insensitive, perennially dissatisfied with their condition and forever demanding a larger share of the cake'.* The insecure Indians who see an uncertain future in Fiji had to adopt this attitude to maintain themselves and their families. Perhaps this is the only view that Geddes perceived when considering why Indo-Fijians emigrate. I believe the following factors cannot be ignored.

No one race has a monopoly on poverty. Poverty affects all ethnic groups and is especially prevalent in urban areas. The government has given the urban poor little attention. They are occasionally referred by politicians as weapons to enforce the racial divide. For example in June 1994, the military coup leader and the sitting Prime Minister of Fiji, Sitiveni Rabuka warned the parliament that *'the poor urban Fijians were a destabilizing force'*. He said:

> *They feel disadvantaged. They feel they are starving. They may look well but their very soul is starving. As long as this happens, I cannot guarantee that there will not be another coup in this land.*
>
> *Cited* in Lal (1994:148)

Fijian poverty provided a convenient ground to reinforce Indo-Fijian responsibility for the coups of 2000 that has created an unstable social environment and upsurge in Indo-Fijian emigration.

Indo-Fijians who dominate the retail trade and transportation industry are particularly vulnerable to violent robberies and other economic crimes at the hands of the unemployed and working class indigenous Fijian youths (Adinkrah 1996:12). 'Inter-racial rapes' are increasing and the abuse of women has

become more frequent and intense says Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Co-ordinator, Shamima Ali (The *Fiji Times*, February 1, 2001).

The real issue facing the poor is their exclusion from meaningful participation in the economy. Most urban drifters face a restricted job market and become the unemployed of the town. According to Adinkrah (1996:12) joblessness contributes to a high level of property crimes: thefts, break-ins, burglaries and robberies.

Not only the urban dwellers became the victims following the 2000 takeover of parliament, rural Indo-Fijians were especially targeted by thugs. People do not forget for a lifetime if they have been victims of arson, violence and rape. The events of May 19 and its subsequent days remain fresh in people's memories. They question whether it could happen again and are worried about their children's security. A former resident of Muaniweni, now resident at a refugee camp in told me:

> *A Fijian neighbour invited us to his house as a 'protector' during the crisis. At night when we were sleeping, he came to me and said, we should have children together then there will be no trouble.*

Such incidents go unreported as a respondent said *'to save the family's face'*. Indo-Fijians have also lost faith public offices. Even the United States Embassy

is concerned about the issue of human rights here. The *Fiji Times* reported on 1 March 2001:

> *The US human rights report revealed that Human Rights commission chairman Sailosi Kepa tried to stop his workers from investigating human rights abuses. In its 2000 report on Fiji, the un-named authors of the report said the commission ceased to operate after one commissioner resigned and the chairman was accused of conflict of interest because of his marriage to the interim administration's Minister of Social Welfare, Ro Teimumu Kepa.*
>
> *The Commission staff reportedly was denied permission by its chairman to investigate human rights abuses in the Muaniweni area – the site of a number of abuses against the Indo-Fijian community. It said the police force and the then acting commissioner was criticised for not charging prominent people, especially chiefs, for their alleged involvement in criminal acts. On Muaniweni the report said 52 homes belonging to Indians were attacked by supporters of George Speight, forcing residents to flee into the night.*

What then is the position of Indo-Fijians after more than a century of residence in Fiji? No doubt, they have succeeded materially but the majority of them remain squatters and land-less. They control middle level commerce and dominate the professions but are excluded from decision-making government positions. They feel that the laws of their *matrabhumi* is not able to protect them in crisis situations. Insecurity reigns theirs minds, they have not alternative, but to emigrate.

Frequent vandalism of places of worship is another factor that is tolerated by Indo-Fijians. The 1997 Constitution provides for religious freedom and the governments have respected this provision. There have been no restrictions on foreign clergy and missionary activity or other typical activities of religious organizations. While indigenous Fijians remain mostly Christians, the majority of Indo-Fijians are Hindus but a significant number are Muslims and Sikhs. Only a small number of Indo-Fijians are Christians.

However the role of religion in state continues to be a political issue. In the past, former Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka (himself a lay preacher) publicly indicated his willingness to consider making the country 'a Christian state'. His military regime introduced a ban for all but essential services on Sunday following the 1987 coups. All activities were prohibited apart from going to church, a move clearly discriminatory against Indo-Fijians, since most are Hindus. Many Indo-Fijians were severely punished by the army for breaking this law. After much pressure from the business community this law was finally lifted in 1995.

After the execution of 2000 civilian coup, the non-Christian Indo-Fijians again harassed. A number of submissions have been made to the present Constitution Review Commission calling for the country to be considered a Christian state and the re-introduction of the Sunday ban. Several predominantly ethnic Fijian

political parties that participated in the 1999 general elections also called for a Christian state and the re-introduction of measures to mandate respect for Christians.

While Hindus and Muslims respect the Christian values, the daily newspapers frequently report cases (*Fiji Television* 11 August 2001) of robbery and arson of Hindu temples. The local temple in the research site was broken into on 30 June for the second time this year. This creates a situation of intolerance, as vandals do not even spare their place of worship. Very rarely the criminals are caught and if they are most receive suspended term. At times cases go unreported for fear that the vandals may further victimise. This shows that although religious tolerance is legally enforced in practice the situation is different.

Education

According to Gannicott (1990), there are significant differences between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians in terms of school attendance and educational attainment. These differences are dependent on factors that affect each community in various ways.

Education is treasured by Indo-Fijians. A senior Alliance official in the 1970s most suitably sums the Indian feeling towards education. He said:

> *Though the leases of the land have been increased to 30 years, this act merely postpones the time when land could be taken away. To prepare for that day, Indians feel their children should be educated to find alternative occupations or if migrating, be able to find a suitable job in their newly adopted country. Discrimination they feel could deprive their children of much needed education and leave them unprepared when the leases of their parents land expire. Neither the possession of their parents who could lose their lease, nor the children deprived of opportunity for education, gives security. They should be ready taking into consideration the emphasis placed and the sacrifices made by Indian people in educating their children.*
>
> (quoted in Ali 1980:205-6)

Even though Indo-Fijians constitute nearly half of Fiji's population, historical circumstances as shown earlier determine that Indo-Fijians own barely 2 per cent land in Fiji. Considering the Indian situation, education certainly is a means of survival when their native land leases expire.

Indo-Fijians do not want to see their children grow up untrained and continue to live as manual labourers just as their forefathers. If evicted, they do not want their children destined for slavery of someone else, like their indentured forefathers. Hence history must not repeat itself for the *children of girmitiya*. For this reasons the Indo-Fijians are preparing their children through education. With

education their community has descended from illiterate and semi-literate labourers to a fairly educated lot. Now it also enables them to emigrate.

Indian achievement in education largely depends on individual efforts and commitment of parents. As mentioned earlier colonial rule was founded on racist precepts and education did not escape the concept of racial separation either. There was a lack of government involvement in the establishment of schools for Indians in Fiji in the early years of colonial rule.

Not only the colonial government the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and Europeans generally vigorously opposed the educating Indians (Ali 1980:30). Up until 1916 there was no government schools for Indo-Fijian children. It was only through the efforts of the missionaries that an Indian received education.

Finally under the Education Ordinance 1916 some standard of education was established but then again this was exclusively racial. Thus in 1938, of the 442 schools in Fiji, 16 were for Europeans and Part-Europeans, 346 were for Fijians and 80 for Indians (Narayan 1984:73)[12]. The policy of segregation and differential

[12] Narayan observed Indo-Fijian literacy rates for school going age cohorts for the decades between 1920 and 1950 were well below the other ethnic categories. Of the 80 Indian schools in 1938, seven were government schools and 6 were eligible for grants-in-aid. Only one school had a secondary department. The establishment of the Marist Brothers Secondary School in 1934, the first multiethnic high school, opened the doors to some Indo-Fijians. Narayan recorded that in 1938, two-thirds of the country's 15,000 odd Indo-Fijian school going age children between the ages of 6 and 14 were not attending schools (Narayan 1984:73). Narayan points out that although government's gross expenditure on education had increased from fifty nine thousand pounds in 1938 to one hundred and eighty four thousand four hundred and twenty eight pounds in 1947, the disparity in the allocation of funds to the designated racial categories remained. Narayan notes that a decade later, in 1957, 30 per cent of Indo-Fijian children did not attend school at all, many of whom were girls.

treatment in Indian education continued until the early 1960s. The government's lack of interest and Indian quest for education is seen by the presence of a large number of community-based Indian schools in Fiji today.

The Indian struggle to educate their children was compounded upon independence. There has been a concern for ethnic Fijian education since the pre-independence period. The postcolonial Alliance government and the interim government have sought to address the disparity in educational achievement between the two major ethnic categories through 'affirmative action programmes'.

Indo-Fijians do not want to fall a victim of the quota system for student intake adopted by the government. The post-independence governments have promoted exclusively ethnic schools thus producing the racial chauvinism that is all too apparent in post-coup Fiji that is not bringing the races any closer.

Consequently, without competition with Indo-Fijians, Fijians are still lagging behind in education and the rate of achievement is still better amongst the Indo-Fijians.

Present Economic Climate

The Indo-Fijian emigration trend will be highly dependent on the economic climate of the country. Fiji's economy is ahead of many third world countries and is perhaps the most developed economy in the South Pacific island countries. In 1996, the Gross National Product per capita was F$1874[13]. Like many other developing countries, Fiji earns its foreign exchange earnings from a few economic activities. These are sugar, tourism and garment manufacturing. However the future of all 3 industries are subject to external influences beyond the control of government and the country, and the internal political situation cannot be ignored either.

The crucial feature of Fiji's economic environment as a plural society created by colonization is its specialization. The specialized parts of the economy have tended to emerge as areas of ethnic concentration so that over time each economic sector becomes the territory of one or another ethnic group. This 'social closure' was designed to maximise the power of a group in a situation of market competition (Weber 1968:342). The colonial rulers established the rules and practices to exclude others, in order to gain a competitive advantage. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of Fiji.

Fijians, Europeans and Indo-Fijians dominated the major productive and distributive components of the economy. Fijians provided the land, Europeans the capital and managerial expertise and Indians the labour. The economy of

Fiji was to balance as a 'three-legged stool' where each group made separate and equal contributions for the well-being of the country [14].

However, the creation of this ethnically specialized economy, while it initially facilitated the maintenance of political order, contained the germs of its own self-destruction when significant changes occurred in the society's movement from colonization to independence.

The economic growth made possible by the Indian settlement has enormously benefited both ethnic groups. In rural areas most Indians depend on Fijian landlords for leases and in the urban areas most Fijians depend on Indo-Fijian business. Norton (1977) notes that while Indo-Fijians gained advantages in business and independent professions, Fijians enjoyed widening opportunities for salaried government jobs. It has been the result of the deliberate government policy since 1987, despite Indo-Fijians generally having higher educational levels than indigenous Fijians (Gannicott 1990:7-9).

Commercial agriculture with sugarcane farming is dominated by Indo-Fijians who lease land from indigenous Fijians. Three-fifths of some 22,000 individual small growers are Indo-Fijians, who supply sugar cane to the four mills in Fiji. Sugar production, the backbone of the economy, occupies over half of the country's arable land, employs about a fifth of the work force, serves as the principal

[13] Price Waterhouse (1996), 1997 *Fiji Budget Commentary*, Suva. P.1
[14] Scarr, D. 1983. *Fiji: The Three-Legged Stool. Selected Writings of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna*. London.

source of foreign exchange (38 per cent in 1990) and accounts for about 13.6 per cent of the Gross National Product.

The government controlled (68.1 per cent) Fiji Sugar Corporation, owners of the industry's four sugar mills, says it is worried that so many productive farms will go out of production and that annual output present of around four million tonnes of sugarcane by small farmers could be severely eroded. This would have severe national economic repercussions since sugar is one of the country's core industries.

According to Mahendra Reddy of the University of the South Pacific by 2005, 29578 hectares of land would have reverted to landowners, pushing sugar cane production to a crisis point. The Chief Executive of the Fiji Sugar Cane Growers Council, Jagannath Sami, predicts that the industry could collapse. A report by the Landel-Mille Sugar Commission argued that 'the nature of the land tenure by lease holders does not encourage capital investment in the form of machinery and other means of capital to boost productivity because of doubts on the renewal of leases during the 1990s (The *Fiji Times*, April 4, 1991).

Considering all these comments the future of sugar industry looks bleak. The farmers will have to re-adjust their lives with no land and no jobs. Since land is the monopoly of one group, displaced tenants have little prospect of finding alternative land for farming.

In the tourism industry, indigenous Fijians largely dominate, especially in non-managerial level positions. Expatriates and others mostly hold the managerial positions. Tourists only go to safe and secure places. There has been a huge decline in the number of tourist arrivals because of the insecurity created the 2000 coups.

The third most important sector, manufacturing developed in 1987 with the creation of 'Free Trade Zones'. According to Cole and Hughes (1988), these zones were established to stimulate the economy after the 1987 coups. Investor confidence was slowly improving, but after the 2000 coup many investors simply closed their doors and fled the country. Genuine long-term investors do not want to risk putting money in an unstable political environment.

The outlook is certain for a negative growth in the economic sector. Despite enormous pressure placed on indigenous Fijian development since independence, the predominance of Indo-Fijians in both commercial life and private enterprise remains. For many Indo-Fijians building confidence in the country for the second time is a tough task. They are emigrating in large numbers and leaving the problems of Fiji to be sorted out by the Fijians.

In 1996, the *Fiji Times* (April 26) reported that 40,000 people had left the country permanently since the military coups of 1987. This represents more than 5 per

cent of the population. In other words one in 20 people left the country. One of the more extreme predictions reported again in the *Fiji Times* on March 19, 2001 says that Fiji would lose 20 per cent of the population in the next two years and another 30 per cent in about five years time. These predictions were based on the fact that 46,000 passports had been issued by the Immigration Department after George Speight's *civil coup* on 19 May 2000.

According to Professor Vijay Naidu (*Sunday Times*, May 20,2001) of the University of the South Pacific some 12,000 people left Fiji last year (2000) with 5,000 indicating that they were leaving for good. Since 1987, close to 100,000 Fiji citizens migrated, most of whom were skilled and professional people. This is relatively a high number and is a cause of concern. Mass exodus of people could impoverish Fiji.

Indo-Fijians feel discriminated, insecure and are uncertain of their future in Fiji. For this reasons Geddes' argument that most Indo-Fijians emigrate for material gains does not hold. The socio-political factors also need to be considered while studying Indo-Fijians emigration.

Next I will look at Bedford's work. He presented a detailed account of Fijian migration to New Zealand. He looked at the magnitude of emigration from Fiji generally, highlighting the impact of the two coups in 1987 on emigration to New Zealand saying:

In the quarter century since the early 1960s, Fiji has lost over 100,000 of its citizens to overseas destinations. The equivalent of almost 30 per cent of this loss was recorded between 1 May 1987 and 31 March 1989. (See Table below)

Table 3.2: Net Migration Losses of Fiji Citizens

Period	Net Migration Loss
1962-1966	931
1967-1971	7 430
1972-1976	20 905
1977-1981	19 187
1982-1986	26 529
1987- March 1989	32 249
1962- March 1989	107 231
May 1987- March 1989	29 363

Source: Annual & Monthly reports of Bureau of Statistics (Re-printed in Bedford 1989:142)

Bedford (1989:145) notes that during the decade 1973 to 1983, net emigration fluctuated between 3000 and 5000 per annum. In 1983 the figure reached 6000 for the first time, and by the end of 1987 the annual loss had risen to 18,000. He says that the year of the coups will always be identifiable.

In a joint study of Bedford and Levick (1988:146)) the following results were obtained:

> *Before 1980 net gains of Fiji citizens to New Zealand population rarely exceeded 500 in any one year. For at least a decade the main immigration issue relating to movements between Fiji and New Zealand had been the official 'Work Permit Schemes'. These provided for contract employment in New Zealand of between 250 and 500 Fiji citizens a year.*
>
> *During the 1980s the number of Fiji citizens arriving in New Zealand totaled just over 72,000. The equivalent of 57 per cent of these arrivals (25,400) entered between 1 April 1987 and 31 March 1989* (Bedford 1989:147).

According to Bedford and Levick the coups in Fiji, together with changes in New Zealand immigration policy in 1987 resulted in a substantial increase in the number of Fiji citizens gaining residence rights in New Zealand, the majority of whom were Indo-Fijians. This clearly shows that insecurity and discrimination are the main factors that are 'pushing' a large proportion of Indians from Fiji which contradicts Geddes claim that Indians mainly emigrate for material possessions.

I argue that ever since their arrival in the country, Indians were forced to follow an Indian version of the principles of the 'Protestant Ethic'. Their survival was dependent on hard labour which has eventually led to material possessions. I agree with Buchignani who said Indians saw the Europeans as role models and they strived to be like them. While writing about Indo-Fijians in Canada (1982: 82) he wrote:

> *Europeans (mostly British and Australians) provided Indians with important role models for economic and social success that have been incorporated into ideas of self. The small Fijian Indian middle class has become heavily anglicized and has attempted to gain social recognition and acceptance of Europeans on European terms. This response has been demographically broadened by the rapid development of an educational system based on English models.*

Emigration has meant a decline in economic and material welfare of a significant number of Indo-Fijian overseas. It has led to class and status decline for many professionals. This is also true for many Indo-Fijian emigrants too. A study titled 'Ethnic Identity and National Identification: The Social Construction of Commitment of Indian Immigrants to Australia' (Waddell & Vernon 1989: 17) stated:

> *In India, the respondents were generally professional, managerial, and self-employed working people; in Australia, they are largely non-professional 'middle-class' employees.*

Yet most respondents have redefined their situation and largely accept their employment in the adopted countries. However their evaluation of their jobs is frequently negative in relation to the high expectations of their families. As a result, the working lives of these respondents are often fraught with tensions with which they must negotiate almost daily. In most cases good medical care, standard of living, and security balance the status decline.

Emigration for the 'poor' and the 'unskilled' who normally join family member as 'chain migrants', it has meant prosperity. For them job opportunities are better overseas. However, these emigrants have to wait for several years[15] before they get the chance to emigrate and by the time they arrive in their new homes their ability to earn declines. Their material possessions are not obtained until they take double or triple employment. Socially this is a disturbing situation and in many cases it has affected family relationships. Some respondents felt that the divorce rates for Indo-Fijians resident overseas were higher than in Fiji.

Lastly Geddes can again be questioned, if we consider the statistics. Most of those who emigrate are the skilled and professional Indo-Fijians. Their emigration was triggered by political uncertainties after the coups. Therefore, to deny the importance of the social and political factors in Indo-Fijian emigration will mean avoiding problems that encourage ethnically based emigration from Fiji.

Forsyth (1991) studied Fiji's emigration in a wider context placing it under a regional study. This work was done for the South Pacific Forum Secretariat for its member countries in relation to *'Migration and Remittance in the South Pacific Forum Island Countries'*, Fiji is one of its members. In terms of remittances, Forsyth (1991:44) found that Fiji showed large net negative flows, as high as F$33 million in 1990. There is good evidence that Indo-Fijians rarely send remittances (Raj 1991). Connell (1980) hypothesized that 'migrants planning a

[15] Applications lodged at American Embassy in 1989 are now being processed, a spell of 12 years.

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permanent return home would 'invest' high levels of remittances before the trip'. Therefore Forsyth's study reflects that the majority who go from Fiji, do not come back. Indo-Fijians particularly take large sums of their savings and invest them in their new homes. This does not mean they discontinue ties with their families in Fiji. Assistance does come in other forms.

The next study breaks new ground by making the best use of primary data and suggests the methodology for studying emigration pointing to the inadequacy of relying on data on formal emigration. Chetty and Prasad's work in 1993 highlighted the serious economic implications of high levels of recent emigration. They discuss the magnitude of emigration and its labour market and other consequences. The study provides detailed analyses of skill losses to Fiji due to emigration. Case studies of teachers and workers in the sugar industry were applied.

They argue that government data on emigration are not adequate. In their incisive review of emigration from Fiji, Chetty and Prasad argue for instance, that *'there is a serious conceptual problem in measuring migration in Fiji'* (Chetty & Prasad 1993:3). Bedford (1989:143) had also noted earlier that Bureau of Statistics emigration data *'greatly understates the extent of population loss of Fiji since the first coup'*.

Chetty and Prasad clarify the reasons for this. First, government data rely on emigrants declaring their departing status and most emigrants do not correctly state their reasons. Secondly, there is a degree of return migration that escapes government emigration statistics. Finally, the most important reason is that emigration data misses the fact that many Fiji-born people who left Fiji in the aftermath of the coups as visitors have obtained permanent residence.

Bedford (1989:152) notes that the last reason particularly applies to New Zealand and Canada. This is also true for Australia according to Rizvi (1981:123), he says: *'during the 'easy visa' period of the 1970s when Australia gave relatively free access to short term visitors and allowed them to work during their visits and many Indo-Fijians become 'overstayers'.* Considering these situations, Chetty and Prasad have correctly stated that it is necessary to examine more than one set of emigration data if we are to establish likely losses from emigration over the years.

They have done an impressive comparative study in this regard. The first set of data (Table 3.3 and Figure 3.4) show the number of residents declaring themselves emigrants in their departure cards (Bureau of Statistics 1996). It indicates a relatively high level of emigration from 1973-1977; lower emigration between 1978-1980; a steady build up of the year of the coups in 1987; a doubling of emigration in the years immediately following the coups; and a lower, but steady emigration rate of people a year since.

TABLE 3.3: DECLARED EMIGRANTS FROM FIJI 1973-1994

Year	Number	Percentage change
1973	3747	na
1974	5369	43
1975	4461	-17
1976	2527	-43
1977	3809	51
1978	2062	-46
1979	1683	-18
1980	1878	12
1981	2754	47
1982	2672	-3
1983	2752	3
1984	2368	-14
1985	3007	27
1986	3048	1
1987	5394	77
1988	5695	6
1989	5759	1
1990	5849	2
1991	4686	-3
1992	4783	-16
1993	4284	-10
1994	4317	1
Total	**83904**	
Av 73-94	3814	
Av 80-86	2640	
Av 87-94	5221	
Av 87-90	5674	

Source: Current Economic Statistics various

A total of 83,904 people emigrated between 1973-1994, averaging 3814 per annum. Between 1980 and 1986, prior to the coups, emigration averaged about 2640 per annum. The coups led to a sharp increase in emigration: 41,767 of the total emigrants between 1973-1994 emigrated after the coups, comprising almost 50 per cent of the total. The average number of emigrants after the coups almost doubled from 2640 per annum between 1980-1986 to 5674 per annum between 1987-1990.

To clarify the forceful argument of Chetty, Prasad (1993) and Bedford (1989) that official emigration data grossly underestimate the level of emigration in the post coup period, this data is compared with data on *implied* emigration (See Table 3.4). In column three, *implied* emigration refers to the difference between resident departures and arrivals, while column six presents the difference between three-year moving average resident departures and arrivals. It is clear that government data based on declared emigrants consistently and significantly underestimate the true extent of emigration.

Table 3.4 shows that between 1962 and 1994, nearly 141,000 people emigrated from Fiji, *representing 30 per cent of the total population of Fiji in 1966*. There was an unmistakable and dramatic increase in emigration after the coups. In the eight years from 1979-1986, 38,916 people emigrated from Fiji averaging 4865 per year. Between 1987 and 1994, however, 65,864 people emigrated, an increase of 69 per cent. The average yearly emigration in this period also increased dramatically from 4865 between 1979-1986 to 8233 in the post-coups period (Table 3.4). The contrasts in emigration using declared status (Table 3.3) and implied emigration (Table 3.4) are particularly noteworthy. Between 1987-1994, government data indicated a total emigration of 41,767 while implied emigration is 65,864 or almost 58 per cent more.

Table: 3.4 IMPLIED MIGRATION FROM FIJI, 1962-1994

Year	Resident Departure	Resident arrivals	Implied emigration	% change	Implied Emigration2
1962	6363	6351	12.00		
1963	8038	7475	563.00	4591.70	
1964	10828	9219	-820.00	-245.6	-82.00
1965	12239	10592	236.00	-128.8	-7.00
1966	14565	11383	856.00	262.70	91.00
1967	11390	14244	321.00	-62.50	471.00
1968	12660	10092	1298.00	304.40	825.00
1969	16836	11717	943.00	-27.30	854.00
1970	18657	14003	2833.00	200.40	1691.00
1971	20637	16626	2031.00	-28.30	1936.00
1972	26667	19005	2632.00	29.60	2499.00
1973	30372	21797	4871.00	85.10	3178.00
1974	28597	25485	4877.00	0.10	4127.00
1975	29026	24450	4147.00	-15.00	4632.00
1976	28597	24671	4355.00	5.00	4460.00
1977	31597	25687	2910.00	-33.20	3804.00
1978	31569	27499	4070.00	39.90	3778.00
1979	33937	30079	3859.00	-5.20	3613.00
1980	35089	31304	3785.00	-1.90	3905.00
1981	37053	23210	4743.00	25.30	4129.00
1982	37445	32427	5018.00	5.80	4515.00
1983	36996	33050	3946.00	-21.40	4569.00
1984	40747	35965	4782.00	21.20	4582.00
1985	44236	38043	6193.00	29.50	4974.00
1986	46958	40368	6590.00	6.40	5855.00
1987	58583	40204	18359.00	178.60	10381.00
1988	55401	44727	10674.00	-21.90	11874.00
1989	59201	49814	9387.00	-12.10	12807.00
1990	60700	54895	5805.00	-38.10	8622.00
1991	64593	58632	5961.00	2.70	7051.00
1992	61410	57023	4387.00	-26.40	5384.00
1993	63511	58495	5016.00	14.30	5121.00
1999	64477	58202	6275.00	25.10	5226.00
Total	1115757	974842	149915.00		134864.00
Av 1968-94	33811	29541	4270.00		
Av 1979-86	31966	27752	4214.00		
Av 1970-86	39058	34193	4865.00		
Av 1987-94	40983	42749	6233.00		
Total 79-86	312461	273545	38916.00		
Total 87-94	487856	421992	65864.00		

Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Tourism and Migration Statistics; 1962-74 data from Jones 1976

(Note: The comparison in emigration data is taken from a paper prepared by Rajesh Chandra, Professor of Geography, University of the South Pacific, Suva and Nand Kishore Chetty, Deputy Government Statistician Bureau of Statistics, Suva to the First International Meeting of the Asia Pacific Migration Research Network, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 11-13 March 1996. I collected this information via the internet under the topic 'Migration Issues in the Asia Pacific-Fiji. (1996)
Website address: www.unesco.org/most/apmrnwp6

Chetty and Prasad (1993:10) show that the 1987 level of formal emigration represents a significant increase of 182 per cent over the 1986 level, and a 286 per cent increase over the net departure figure for the previous year.

My own inquiries reveal that many emigrants certainly do not give the correct information when they emigrate. Many of them obtained tourist visas to gain entry and later became overstayers. The earlier emigrants who entered under this category and became permanent residents did not hesitate to talk on this issue. Among the later emigrants there was a tendency to hide how they entered a particular country. A case at this point should be mentioned. While conducting this research I came across a family that became very suspicious of my inquiries and did not co-operate. In a couple of days time thjey left for North America. Later I was informed that they had obtained their visa through fraudulent means.

Naidu (1997) did the latest study on emigration. She looked at why professionals migrated from Fiji.

Her case study was on emigration of Medical Doctors and she says there were various reasons why doctors emigrated. She concluded:

> *A complex mix of socio-cultural, economic and political factors influence emigration, which may be thought as 'push' and 'stay' factors. The major 'push' factor for Fiji doctors is dissatisfaction with the*

> *working conditions in the hospitals. Perceived unequal power sharing at the national level was another significant 'push' factor, followed by poor salary. Better working conditions and salaries abroad were the most significant 'pull' factors, followed by higher living standards and education opportunities. Job satisfaction and life style in Fiji was the significant 'stay' factors.*

Her research showed that 'brain drain' in relation to doctors had a devastating effect on the health system in the hospitals. The recent cases of Priya Naidu and Jerry Cokomata have been widely publicised in Fiji and prove the point raised by Naidu. The quality of service frightens many in Fiji and in this research some people did indicate their reasons for emigration was to attain better medical services.

STUDIES IN HOST SOCIETIES

There has been only one serious study of Fijians in their new home. Buchignani studied the process of Fijian migration to Canada and their experience in the host society. Buchignani (1980:82) found out that Indo-Fijians are proud of their 'Fijian' identity:

> *...Fijian Indians see themselves as being Fijian. They do not feel commonality with South Asia Indians despite sharing many superficial cultural practices with them. Fijian historical experiences have been so*

> *divergent and communication between Fiji and India has been so weak that only the very old and those few recent immigrants emphasized this distinction, as have the sharp social cleavages between the majority of Fijian Indians who are descendants of indentured labourers and recent Indian (chiefly Gujarati) arrivals who came on their own as traders and businessmen. Fijian Indians generally consider South Asian Indians to be more arrogant, closed-minded, traditional, and economically unethical than themselves.*

This same expression could be applied to those Indo-Fijians in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Indo-Fijians associate mostly with Indo-Fijians except in the work environment. This has led to formation of a strong Indo-Fijian community in these countries. When they unite in a country where 'multiculturalism' is promoted the chance of racial polarization is slim and they progress with others. Indo-Fijian emigrants have done very well in host countries. Their progress is observed by families in Fiji which is 'pulling' many more from Fiji.

The Australian Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (1995) added to the literature of emigration from Fiji. This document indicates the number of Fiji emigrants in Australia. It describes their spatial distribution, gender and age, family status, prosperity to obtain citizenship, labour force status, occupation and income. The data released in this profile document clearly shows the dramatic increase in the number of Fiji-born people in Australia

after the 1987 coups. In 1986 there were 15,000 Fiji-born people which rose to 31,000 in 1991 (ABIMPR 1995:3).

The high proportion of ex-Indo-Fijians is indicated by the language and religious affiliations. It reads (ABIMPR 1995:2):

> *The main languages spoken at home by Fiji-born people in Australia were Hindi (50.2 per cent), English (26.1 per cent) and Fijian (11.1 per cent).*
> *At the 1996 census the major religions amongst Fiji-born were Hinduism (15,409 persons), Islam (4,438 persons) and Western Catholic (4,248 persons).*

In the 1996 census, it is estimated that the Fijian community size of 53,745 people in Australia. (ABIMPR 1995:3). This community profile is very useful for governments, academics and others. For small island nations who do keep a proper record of the movement of their people, it gives a fair idea of where their populations move. Since the emigration trend is mostly towards developed nations, it would be good for developed nations to compile a community profile like this one.

Summary

This chapter analysed that studies on emigration undertaken by scholars of various disciplines. These scholars were divided into three categories. The first category wrote on emigration prior to the 1987 coups, second category analyzed emigration after the coups and the last category studied immigrants in the host societies.

I interpreted their work by considering the social, economic and political conditions that affect the individual's decision to emigrate. An analysis was made on each scholar depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the their argument. The chapter also applied the relevance of the migration theory in the context of Fiji.

The next chapter focuses on the Indo-Fijian emigration pattern.

CHAPTER FOUR

INDO-FIJIANS EMIGRATE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the Indo-Fijian emigration trend before and after the military and civilian coups. Fiji's economy has continually been disrupted by unexpected events such as natural disasters, a drop in commodity prices and most of all, political crisis. These factors have contributed to the transformation of society. As a result it has had significant implications for national development which in turn affects the everyday life of people. In these desperate situations people seek to emigrate.

Historically, emigration is mainly viewed as people in search of 'greener pastures' in the social, economic and political sense. No single cause is ever sufficient to explain why people decide to leave their country and settle in another. It is essential to try to understand all aspects of the migratory process.

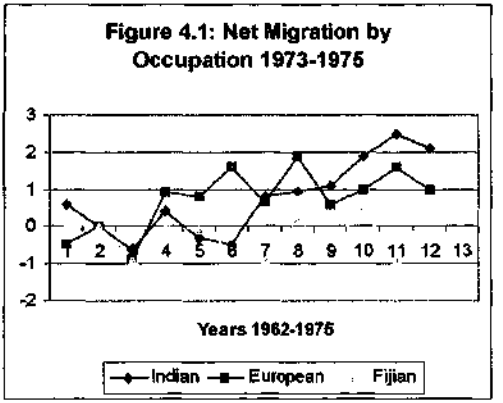
Inter-racial or communal division is a hidden factor that is one of the major causes of instability in Fiji, which is usually interpreted on 'racial' terms. I will briefly look at the General Elections of 1977, 1987 and 1999 to highlight the

complex political factors at work that contributes to the clouds of uncertainty that hangs over Fiji.

The aim is to show that ethnic separatism initiated under the *Native Policy* did not erode upon independence but was inherited and nurtured by the incoming governments. As Fiji progressed, separatism led to an uneven development of ethnic groups. Since independence, governments have been implementing discriminatory policies in the form of 'affirmative action' programmes within which Indo-Fijians suffer, consequently seek to emigrate.

INDO- FIJIAN EMIGRATION TRENDS

More Indo-Fijians emigrated prior to independence than any other race (Jones 1976:28, Connell 1985:48). It has been estimated that from 1962 to 1977 emigration had removed as many persons from Fiji as natural deaths and that



Source: Jones 1976: 12

90 per cent of the emigrants were Indians. Figure 4.1 shows that from 1962 to 1975 Indo-Fijians were more mobile than others. Their mobility increased after Fiji gained independence from Britain (ABIMPR 1995:3).

Economic difficulties and the continuous rejection of political equality for Indians made the Indo-Fijians realise that Fiji may not be able offer them the security they need. Independence on 10 October 1970 provided them with the unrestricted movement that led to the rise in emigration. Table 4.1 shows the

emigration loss of Fijian citizens from 1973 to1986, majority of whom were Indo-Fijians. A relatively high post-independence level of emigration is indicated from 1973 to 1974.

Table 4.1: Emigration Loss of Fiji Citizens 1973-1986

Year	No. of Emigrants
1973	3747
1974	5369
1975	4469
1976	2527
1977	3809
1978	2062
1979	1683
1980	1878
1981	2754
1982	2672
1983	2752
1984	2366
1985	3007
1986	3046

Source: Bureau of Statistics 1996

From 1974 to 1980 there was a constant decline in the number of people emigrating, except for a significant rise in 1977. Jones (1976:11) explains the reasons for the decline:

> *Deteriorating economic conditions and rising unemployment in the main countries of destination have resulted in greater restrictions on immigration. Reports coming back from migrants overseas may not be as enthusiastic as previously when the migrants' high hopes of a new life in a new country meet with disappointment and disillusionment. There have been several cases in Fiji of migrants who left with the intention of permanent migration but have since returned. Perhaps also, the first wave of migrants who have the necessary finance and acceptable skills to migrate is over.*

I argue that the slight rise in 1977 may have been largely due to the feeling of insecurity among the Indo-Fijians created by the calls by nationalist politician Sakiasi Butadroka – **'Fiji for Fijians, Indians go back to India'**. Between 1978-1986, there was a decline in emigration. Butadroka was condemned and expelled from the ruling Alliance Party which may have aroused some stability within the Indo-Fijian community that led to a decline in emigration.

Racial harmony was severely damaged after the coups of 1987. Emigration increased dramatically in the 2-3 years following the 1987 coups, with about 44,000 people leaving the country between 1987 and 1990.

From 1987 to 1991 a doubling of previous levels of emigration is observed from Table 4.2. 1992 to 1995 indicate a somewhat lower but a steady rate of Indo-Fijian emigration at a higher level than in pre-coup years.

Chetty and Prasad (1993) note that the 1987 level of formal emigration represents a significant increase of 182 per cent over 1986 level, and a 286 per cent increase over the net departure figure for the previous year (Chetty and Prasad, 1993:10). Indo-Fijians comprised the overwhelming proportion of emigrants (91 per cent) between 1987 and 1995 (ABIMPR 1996).

Table 4.2: FIJI CITIZEN EMIGRATION BY ETHNICITY

Year	Fijians	Indians	Others	Total
1987	351	4294	473	5118
1988	263	4808	425	5496
1989	249	4981	280	5510
1990	307	5020	323	5650
1991	280	4911	241	5432
1992	248	4184	189	4621
1993	268	3707	132	4107
1994	252	3748	155	4155
1995	285	4463	183	4931
1996	319	4527	184	5030
1997	324	3999	170	4493
1998	362	4273	194	4829
1999	418	4244	175	4837
TOTAL	**3926**	**57159**	**3124**	**64209**

Source: Bureau of Statistics

The mass exodus of people from Fiji had caused an important population dynamic for the Indo-Fijian population. Between 1973-1995, a total of 88,635 people emigrated averaging 3814 per annum. Emigration averaged about 2640 per annum between 1980 and 1986, prior to the coups. The coups led to a sharp increase in emigration: 41,767 of the total emigrants between 1974-1994 left after the coups, comprising almost 50 per cent of the total. In addition, the average number of emigrants after the coups almost doubled from 2,640 per annum between 1980 to 1986 to 5,60 per annum between 1987 to 1990 (Chandra & Chetty: 1996).

Table 4.3: Population by Ethnicity 1975 – 1999

Year	Fijians	Indians	Others	Total
1975	253,452	290,185	29,463	573,100
1976	261,331	294,878	34,230	590,439
1977	266,822	300,697	33,972	601,491
1978	272,477	306,957	32,612	612,046
1979	279,137	314,166	33,953	627,256
1980	284,556	320,898	33,726	639,180
1981	290,496	326,346	33,567	650,409
1982	297,005	332,846	33,634	663,485
1983	304,575	339,456	33,450	677,481
1984	312,121	345,148	33,412	690,681
1985	319,481	349,050	33,174	701,705
1986	331,864	348,711	37,452	718,027
1987	338,940	347,508	38,081	724,529
1988	345,580	345,785	38,624	729,990
1989	351,882	343,654	39,113	734,649
1990	357,947	341,214	39,570	738,731
1991	363,881	338,554	40,026	742,461
1992	369,870	338,035	40,361	748,266
1993	376,460	337,981	40,809	755,250
1994	383,602	338,314	41,371	763,287
1995	391,242	338,952	42,045	772,239
1996	395,699	338,021	43,435	777,155
1997	403,726	336,570	56,667	788,963
1998	411,396	337,380	48,912	797,688
1999	419,445	334,683	52,095	806,223

Source: (a) Estimated End Year population 1970-1999 *Bureau of Statistics*
(b) Annual Reports 1900-1940, *Fiji Blue Books*
(c) *Journal of the Legislative Council* 1941-1959
(d) *Annual Reports* 1960-1968, Registrar General's Department

The rates of emigration during 1967-1971 and 1987-1990 illustrate very clearly that social, economic and political factors have a direct impact on the level of emigration from Fiji.

The post-coup period was one of trauma and turmoil for the ethnic Indians. Thousands have left Fiji for other countries thereby bringing in demographic change, which ended their predominant position. Table 4.3 shows the population of Indo-Fijians compared to indigenous Fijian has been declining since 1987.

The major 'push' factor that led to the mass exodus of Indo-Fijians was the insecurity and uncertainty created by the 1987 coups. An explanation for the coups has been a simple racial conflict between the Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians. An in-depth analysis of the crisis reflects that the issues involved are much more complex than people think. A simplistic racial interpretation is inadequate as well as misleading.

At first the coups appeared to be a racist reaction by ethnic Fijians and indeed race was a factor but I agree with Lal (1982:42) *'that there were other (non-racial) factors internal to the Fijian society itself that played a far larger role than has generally been acknowledged'.*

The coup had to be executed in 1987, because some sections of the Fijian community saw the loss of ethnic Fijian dominated Alliance Party after 17 years of rule, as the loss of the indigenous population. Other people, like Derrik Scarr also saw the coup fundamentally as a racial conflict between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

Many others reject the purely racial explanation of the coup. Lal (1982L41) convincingly argued:

> *Racial fears, of course, played a part: it could not have been otherwise in a racially compartmentalised society where cross cultural/ethnic cooperation was*

discouraged. My argument is that these deeply felt anxieties were exploited by politicians for their own ends, people who knew well that Fijians interests were securely entrenched in the constitution

While I agree with Lal, once again I argue the impact of *indirect rule* has had far reaching social, economic and political consequences on the life of the indigenous Fijians, which are expressed in racial terms. The coalition victory threatened the structure established by the British on which post-colonial politics developed. The communal form of voting that was imposed to maintain Fijian paramountcy was in danger of being fragmented. This was not the fault of Indo-Fijian but the threat came from other sources.

Many of the present problems of Fijians arose from disproportionate distribution of land rents, which went, to the chiefs rather than to their people. This has created an unequal distribution of wealth within the Fijian society.

Rents from communal land have made some individuals very wealthy and permitted sizable investment in business, private real estate or industry. The rent received is distributed in the proportions of 25 per cent to the Native Land Trust Board to cover its costs, 22.5 per cent to the three appropriate chiefs and 52.5 per cent to all other members of the landowning *mataqali*. If the mutual obligations which bind chiefs and commoners were observed, much of the 22.5 per cent might be used for the common good. Sometimes this is so, but often it is not. The fact those who become wealthy in this way are mostly chiefs and it

does not reinforce their traditional authority over commoners. The capacity of chiefs to gain power in non-traditional arenas, including politics is increased by turning their interest away from the village.

For this reason, the village economy based on subsistence cultivation continues as before and the chiefs have made no real effort to improve the economic unit. Instead, in recent times, some chiefs have sought to use their traditional standing as a way of gaining personal advantage. Some have turned land that was previously communally owned into private property through leases.

The increase in the number of Fijians with relatively large holdings over which they have secure leases or customary rights to continued use, is increasing the risk that more and more Fijians will no longer have access to sufficient land for an acceptable standard of living. This is one of the several trends leading to greater differentiating in wealth among Fijians and a cause for dissatisfaction. It has also become a reason that Fijian land should not longer be leased. This poses a question that if 83 percent of the land is owned by Fijians than where will 42 percent of the Indian population will live when all leases expire?

Another reason for Fijian dissatisfaction concerned poor governance by the Fijian dominated Alliance Party for nearly two decades. By 1986 the ruling Alliance Party was in deep trouble. The Fiji economy was under severe pressure after a slump in sugar prices and a series of devastating hurricanes. Government

mismanagement contributed also to the growing domestic problems, particularly in urban towns where unemployment was rapidly rising and contributing to a soaring crime rate. Hospital services were under pressure, roads were deteriorating, and housing funds earmarked for those on low incomes were being diverted for high cost housing. Scandals were also rocking the government.

While campaigning for the 1987 elections, Timoci Bavadra, the leader of the Fiji Labour Party said:

> *It is important to remind ourselves that the government resources poured into Lakeba (Ratu Mara's birthplace) are derived from wealth produced by other elsewhere in the country. It is time that the government stopped viewing the rest of Fiji as serving the interest of a few centres in the east. The people of Lakeba are entitled to a share in the national interest, but just a share. It is time we had a government that is more truly national in outlook*
> (The *Fiji Times* 19 July 1986)

Dr Bavadra promised to clean the administration and appealed to the people of Fiji to give him a 'chance to install an efficient, responsive government in place of one that has become arrogant and corrupt through its two decade rule' (Roble 1989:214). People were responsive to the issues raised by Bavadra. The coalition won the election with 28 seats, a majority of four in the 52 seat parliament. Significantly, the coalition captured the crucial Suva Fijian and Indian national seat as well as the south-eastern Fijian and Indian national seats. Nearly

20 percent of ethnic Fijians did not vote. Ten percent of Fijians who did take part voted for the coalition.

The most important factor was that that the Labour/NFP coalition owed its 1987 election victory to a split in the Fijian vote. The swing was not just among urban Fijians, but also among rural westerners who saw Bavadra as one their own. In fact it was a powerful attack on the political hegemony of eastern chiefs. History was repeating itself. The rebellion that was crushed in 1876 by eastern Fijians with the help of British officers - a century later western Fijians installed Timoci Bavadra to lead the nation and restore their dignity.

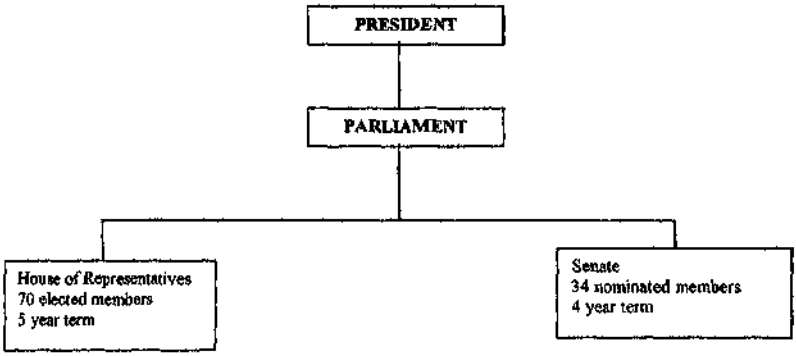
My argument is that non-racial factors played an important part in the lead up to the coups. The division between the Fijians saw a split in Fijian votes that saw a minor chief and an Indian-dominated government came into power. However, since it was an Indian dominated government and represented only 10 per cent of the indigenous population, it had to be removed. A third ranking officer of Royal Fiji Military Forces, Sitiveni Rabuka did this through a military coup on 14 May 1987. Widespread racial violence took place after the coups. The result: a mass migration of people mainly of ethnic Indian origin.

In Rabuka's view since the 1970 constitution brought an Indian dominated government in power, it also had to be removed. The 1990 constitution was adopted on 25 June 1990 by the interim government in spite of the protests by Indo-Fijians. This constitution was highly discriminatory. In the words of Dr M.M. Kaul, *'from the composition of the parliament it is clear that Indians were relegated to a position from where they could not attempt to ever become politically powerful'* (www.overherefiji.com).

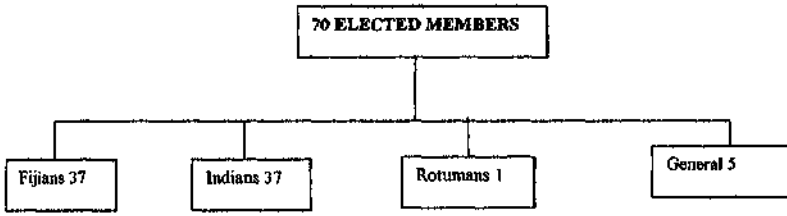
In particular, the 1990 constitution established the prevalence of race-based communal voting system calculated to ensure 'permanent' Fijian control of government and permanent Indian opposition. Only ethnic Fijians could ever be Prime Minister, President and Head of the Armed Forces. A system of affirmative action tried to ensure that at least 50 per cent of all civil service positions were to be filled by Fijians and Rotumans. The 1990 constitution recognised the Great Council of Chiefs, politicising the noble body of the Fijian chiefly system.

The 1990 constitution provided for a 70 seat House of Representatives and allocated 27 for the Indo-Fijians. The 1990 constitution was criticised both nationally and internationally as being racist and communal. It also affected the life of many Fijians with the provincialisation of Fijian politics.

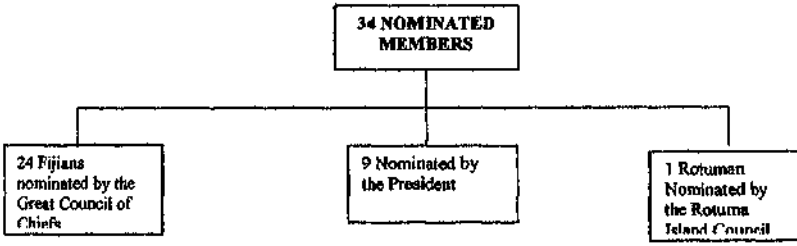
Figure 4.2: House of Representatives under the 1990 Constitution



House of Representatives Composition



Senate



The negative effect of the racist constitution resulted in a huge capital outflow, which considerably affected the economy. The economic policies followed by the new government led to a great deal of unrest among the workers and strikes were held over wages and poor working conditions all over Fiji. Racial tensions also exacerbated during that period. Several attacks were reported on Hindu temples and emigration continued.

Faced with internal economic plight and international economic isolation, Prime Minister, Rabuka was forced to adopt amendments in the racially biased constitution.

1997 Constitution

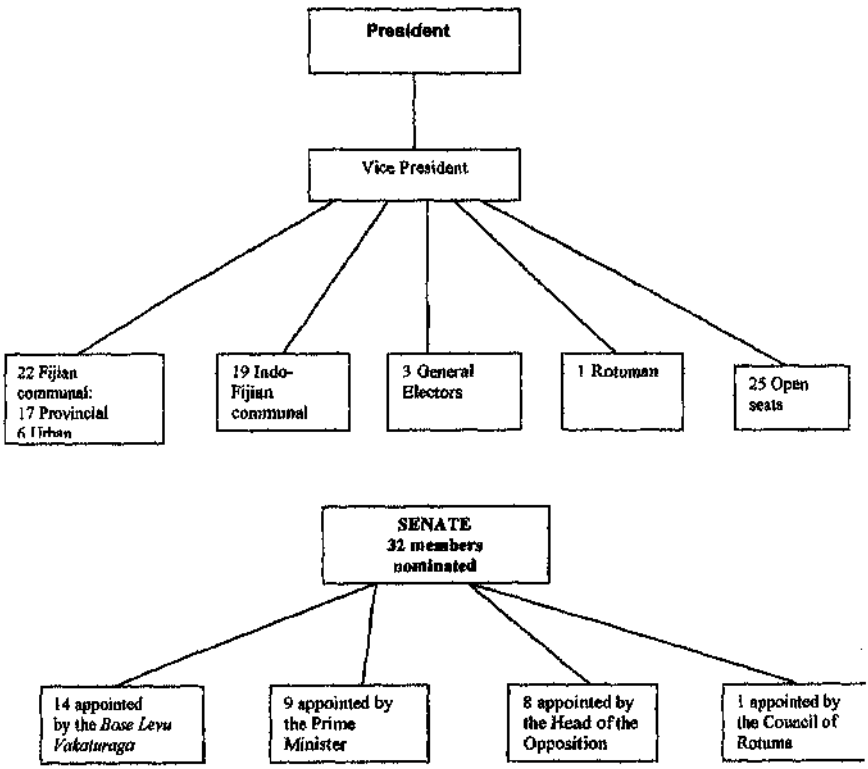
On 6 September 1996 a report of the Constitution Review Commission was presented in the House of Representatives titled 'Towards a United Future'. The objective of the new Constitution was to develop a multi-ethnic government. There was extreme opposition from the nationalist parties but with some modifications, the 1997 constitution was approved unanimously the House of Representatives and the Senate on July 3 and 10, 1997.

The main provisions of the Constitution were that it declared Fiji to be a sovereign Democratic Republic, which guaranteed to all citizens fundamental rights, a universal adult suffrage and equality before the law. It provided a parliamentary form of government with bicameral legislative, comprising a House of Representatives with 71 elected members and a Senate with 32 appointed members; 46 seats in the Lower House were reserved on racial basis (23 for ethnic Fijians, 19 for Indians, 3 for other races and 1 for Rotuma) and remaining 25 seats were open to all.

The Senate was to be appointed by the President on the advice of Council of Chiefs (14 members), Prime Minister (4 members), leaders of opposition (8 members) and Rotuma Island Council (1 member). Thus the constitution of 1997 found an interesting balance of indigenous Fijians, Indo-Fijians and general voters.

Following the adoption of the new constitution, Fiji was back on the path of reconciliation and co-existence. It was readmitted to the Commonwealth in October 1997 and Rabuka was granted an audience with Queen Elizabeth II in London. Diplomatic relations with foreign nations improved considerably. Indo-Fijian emigration stabilized but did not stop.

Figure 4.3: House of Representatives under the 1997 Constitution



The 1999 elections with its multi-ethnic objective promised to be fair, democratic and would bring the different races in the country closer together as one nation. The election under this constitution certainly did change the political emphasis from race to the issues of economic class, social justice and common interest.

The Labour Party won with an overwhelming majority under the preferential voting system. People knew what they were voting for and more importantly, they wanted a change of government (Williams 1999:144). The 1999 election showed that the people of Fiji wanted Fiji to remain a democratic nation and to develop it as a truly multi-ethnic community.

Although people made their democratic choice, many voters did not have their representative in parliament that brought about some sense of discontent. The first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, had to face many challenges. He was the Prime Minister of both modern and traditional Fiji - this is not a dilemma but a way of life in Fiji. An early study by Spate had identified this dilemma and noted it as a problem for the indigenous Fijian trying to reconcile between the traditional and modern Fiji. There is conflict between the 'traditional communal system' and the 'modern economy'. Chaudhry too identified that traditional obligations limited the chance of Fijians getting involved in the modern economy. It limited their chance to equally participate in the economy production.

Despite warning from the President, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Chaudhary tried to possibly try and educate the indigenous Fijian to open their land and make it available for development. Land is the sensitive subject, which needs to be addressed with caution. The mention of 'land' was enough for a failed businessman, George Speight to mobilise Fijians to support him overthrow a democratically elected, Indian-led government. Like Rabuka in 1987, Speight took over the parliament with the assistance of a branch of the military forces, describing as a *civilian* takeover on 19 May 2000 destabilising the political scene once more.

Emigration that had stabilised by 1992 once again began to escalate. Indo-Fijians who have lived side by side with their Fijian neighbours for over 120 years do not want to confront them but emigrating in large numbers.

PROFESSIONAL EMIGRANTS[16]

In crisis situation, the 'best brains' are the first to escape. Their skills are in demand overseas. I have argued earlier that during the 1960s and early 1970s most skilled Indo-Fijian migrants did not cause a 'brain drain' in Fiji. It was only in 1985 that Connell raised his concerns on the issue of 'brain drain'.

Table 4.4 shows that between 1986-1990, the Indo-Fijian professional emigration pattern was constant. The sharp increase occurred during 1987 and continued to increase in 1990. More skilled Indo-Fijian females emigrated than males.

Table 4.4: Professional Indo-Fijian Emigrates by Sex 1986-1990

Year	Males	Females
1986	1078	1284
1987	2027	2267
1988	2362	2446
1989	2409	2572
1990	2444	2576

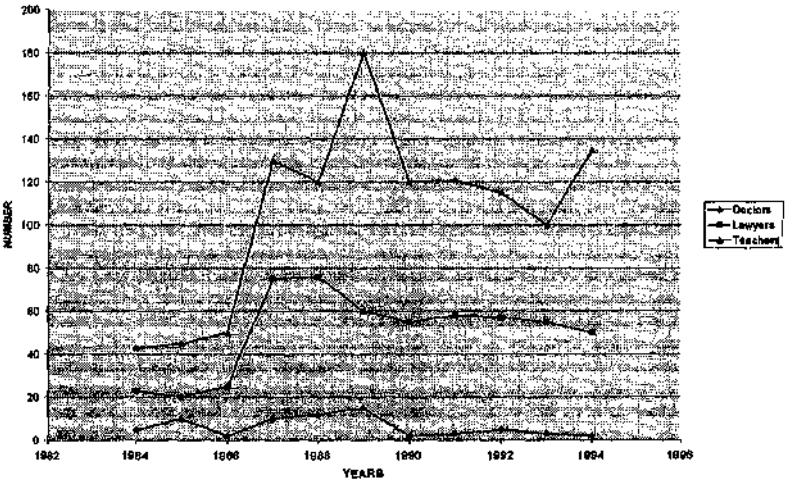
Source: Bureau of Statistics

[16] Unfortunately the Bureau of Statistics was unable to provide me statistics on professional and skilled emigrants separately for the Indo-Fijians. However, this topic should be read keeping in mind that the majority who emigrate are skilled and professional Indo-Fijians. It should also be noted that my focus is more on a rural community which does not have many skilled and professional people. But it must not be forgotten skilled people from Wainasasa also emigrated as short term labour migrants under the skilled category jobs that I have mentioned in chapter three. More discussion is done in the next chapter about the contemporary skilled and professional emigrants from Wainasasa.

Thousands of well-educated, well-trained and experienced people have been lost through emigration. The 'brain drain' affects the sectors which the country can least afford. The majority settled in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States of America.

Figure 4.4 shows the trends in professional emigration prior to the 1987 coups and after the coups for doctors, teacher and lawyers. Teachers comprised the overwhelming majority followed by bookkeepers and medical professionals.

Figure 4.4: PROFESSIONAL EMIGRATION FROM FIJI 1982-1994



Source: Bureau of Statistics 1996

Particularly Australia and New Zealand attract highly skilled migrants. Emigration to Canada and the United States by contrast, has tended to involve those with semi-skill occupations. The main reason could be the entry through family re-union grounds as 'chain' migrants.

Table 4.5 presents the skill composition of emigrants from Fiji between 1987 and November 1995. Between 1987 and November 1995, high proportions of the 1986 stock in various skills areas were lost to emigration. Almost three-quarters of the administrative and managerial workers, nearly one-half of production workers, and nearly one-quarter of professional and technical and clerical workers had emigrated during the period.

Table 4.5: The magnitude of skill losses due to emigration, 1987-November 1995

Occupational category	1986	Number emigrated	Per cent of 1986 stock
Professional, technical and related	17 774	4 500	25.3
Administrative and managerial	2 766	2 043	73.5
Clerical and related	15 569	4 267	27.4
Sales workers	14 661	1 210	8.1
Service workers	15 422	822	5.3
Agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers and fishermen	105 924	957	0.9
Production workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	66 844	30 720	44.6
Workers not classifiable by occupation	20 891	9 164	43.8

Source: Bureau of Statistics (1996) Cited in Website address: www.unesco.org/most/apmmwp6

Almost 86 per cent of all the 1986 stock of accountants and 67 per cent of statisticians, mathematicians and system analyst left Fiji. All these areas are of critical importance. Loss in such numbers can impede sustainable economic growth.

Table 4.6: Skill areas in which more than one-third of the 1986 stock has emigrated, 1988-November 1995

Area	1986 stock	Number emigrated	1986
Architects, engineers and related technicians	1901	1026	54.0
Statisticians, mathematicians and system analysts	155	104	67.1
Economists	32	16	50.0
Accountants	1178	712	60.4
Managers	2246	1917	85.4
Clerical supervisors	299	173	57.9
Computing machine operators	350	204	58.3
Technical salesmen, commercial travellers and manufacturers agents	173	68	39.3
Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians and related workers	188	63	33.5

Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics (1996) Cited in Website address: www.unesco.org/most/apmmwp6

Table 4.6 presents data on occupations where more than a third of the 1986 stock of personnel have been lost to emigration. Table 4.5 is noteworthy not only because of the large number of occupations where losses of this magnitude have taken place, but also because of the extremely high level of losses in strategic areas.

In Table 4.7 the Indo-Fijian male and female professional emigration is compared with the total occupational emigration from Fiji for the year 2000. There was an increase in both Indo-Fijian male and female professional emigration after the 2000 coup and it continued for the next two months. Since then number emigrating has fluctuated.

Table 4.7: Indo-Fijian Skilled Emigration – Jan to Nov 2000

Month	Males	Females	Total for Fiji
January	220	247	565
February	167	171	391
March	175	186	394
April	185	157	404
May	212	240	519
June	181	180	393
July	178	209	417
August	223	204	310
September	158	183	394
October	181	171	414
November	170	186	381
Total	2050	2114	4582

INDO-FIJI WOMEN EMIGRANTS

Gender has generally not been highlighted in analysis of Fiji emigration. This research shows that more females than males appear to be emigrating from Fiji. Between 1987 and November 1995 females comprised 52 per cent of all Fiji emigrants (Bureau of Statistics). Information is not available on the marital status of emigrants. Table 4.4 shows that more Indo-Fijian female professionals emigrated than Indo-Fijian males. This study shows the relative importance of the extent of emigrants getting married abroad.

In Fiji, racial politics of the colonial era had a double effect on women's status. During the indenture period segregation placed absolute power in the hands of the white plantation owners and indentured women did not escape the brutalities of indenture. On the plantation itself these women were vulnerable to *girmitiya*

men as they originated from a patriarchal background. A missionary worker, Miss Hannah Dudley's impression of indentured women was:

> *They arrive in this country timid, fearful women, not knowing where they are to be sent. They are allotted to plantations like so many dumb animals. If they do not perform their work satisfactorily they are struck or fined, or sent to goal. The life on the plantations alters their demeanour and even their very faces. Some look crushed and broken-hearted, others sullen, others hard and evil. I shall never forget the first time I saw 'indentured' women when they were returning from their day's work. The look on those women's faces haunts me.*
>
> (Extract from Hannah Dudley's (missionary worker) letter sent to a magazine in India)
> *Source:* Naidu 1979:63

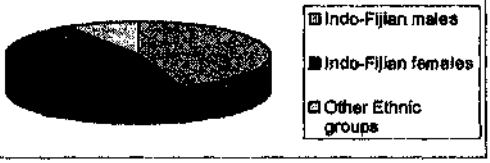
One hundred and twenty years later, the *daughters of girmitiya* are still being terrorised, brutalised and even raped in an independent Fiji. The only difference from the indenture days to now is that, the violence and brutality is now inflicted by another group and generation of men. The Co-ordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Shamima Ali reported (*Fiji Times*, 1 February, 2001) that inter-racial rapes were increasing and the abuse of women had become more frequent and intense. She believed that *'the recent spread of violence could be attributed to the general state of lawlessness since the May 19 event'*.

In a situation such as this, there has risen a tendency among the Indo-Fijian males to protect their women and girls. 'Protectionism' of this nature impedes

their movement and they remain tied to their homes. This would also mean that men exercise a greater control over women when the justice system becomes weak. For these reasons the Indo-Fijian females have a greater incentive to emigrate than Indo-Fijian males.

Figure 4.5 indicates that, among professionals, 46.7 per cent of Indo-Fijian females emigrated compared to 44.7 per cent Indo-Fijian males.

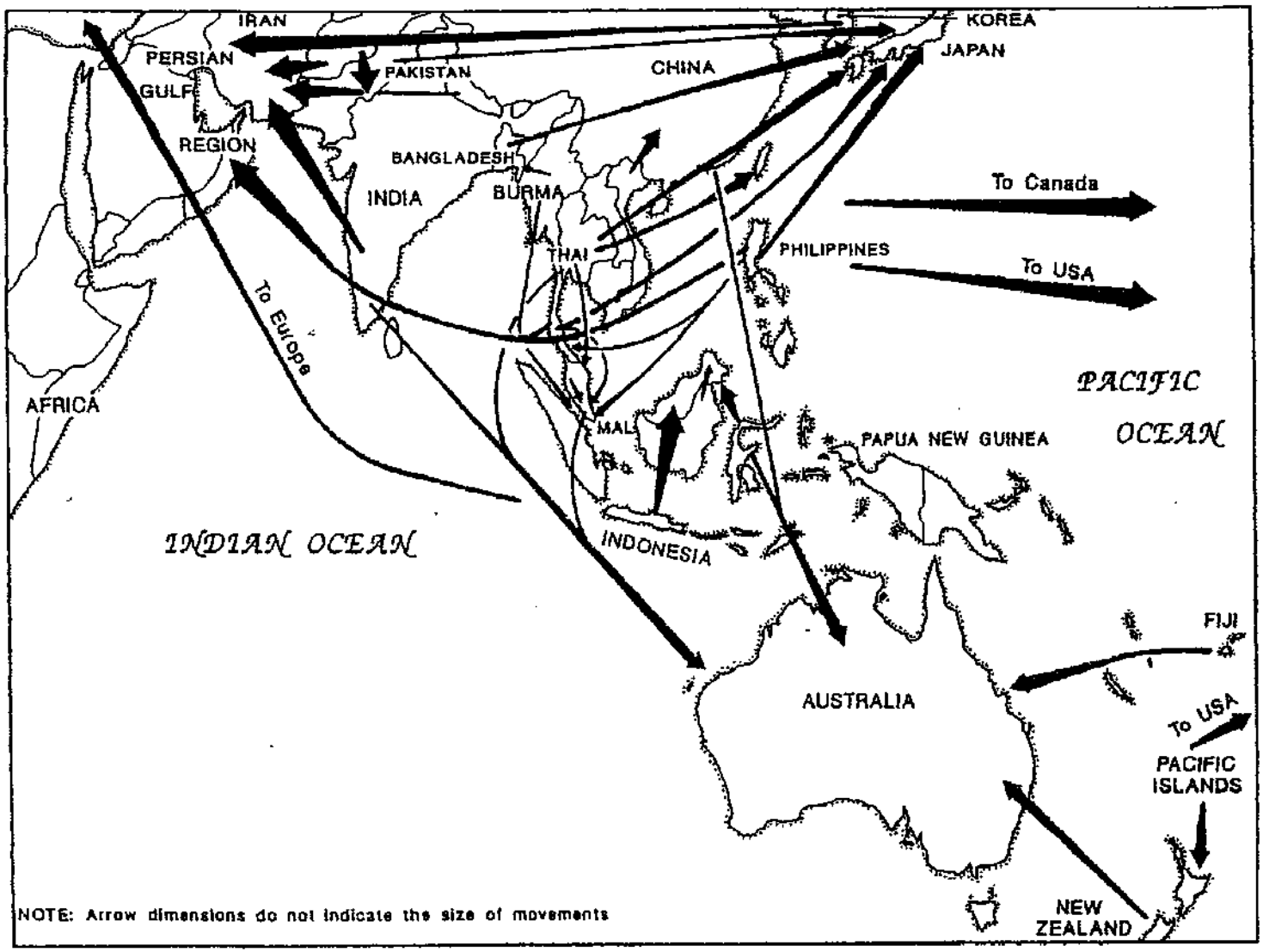
Figure 4.5: Indo-Fijian Professional Emigration by Sex



Source: Bureau of Statistics (Percentage calculated by author)

WHERE DO INDO-FIJIANS GO?

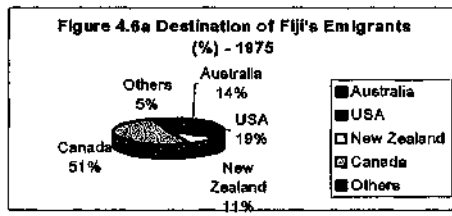
The main countries of destination are developed Pacific-rim countries: Canada, United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. These four countries are referred in the literature as 'countries of immigration', as they actively welcomed migrants, initially from Europe later from Asia/Pacific region. These four countries received 96 per cents of all Fijian emigrants (Chetty & Prasad: 1996).

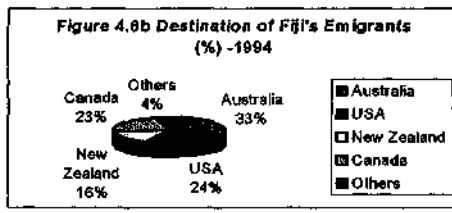


Migrations within the Asia-Pacific region

Initially Canada became an important country of destination followed by the United States of America. Recently Canada has been hosting fewer emigrants than before and Australia has replaced it as an important destination.

Figure 4.6(a,b) shows the changing destinations of Fiji emigrants. In 1975 Canada took 51 per cents of all emigrants from Fiji followed by USA (18 per cents), Australia (14 per cent), New Zealand (11 per cent) and Other (6 per cents). In 1994, Australia was the most significant destination of Fijian migrants, taking 34 per cent, followed by United States of America (23 per cents), Canada (24 per cent) and New Zealand 16 per cent).

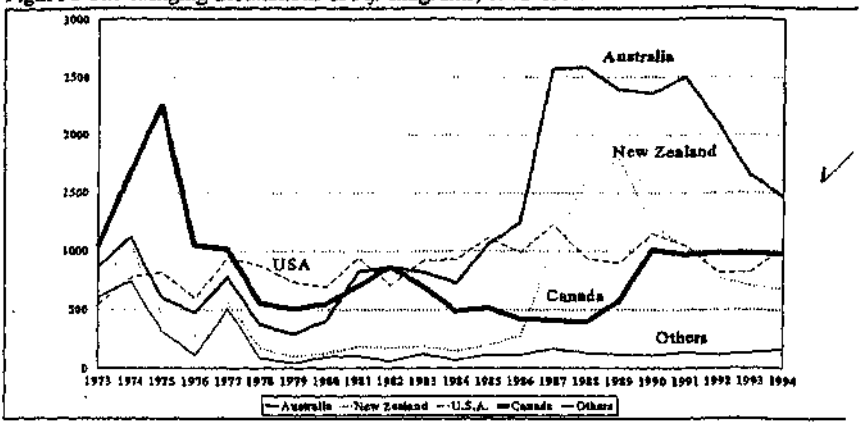




Source: Bureau of Statistics

Figure 4.7: The Changing Destinations of Fiji Emigrants 1973-1994

Figure 2 The changing destinations of Fiji emigrants, 1973-1994



Source: Unpublished data from Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1996.

The change in the direction of movement is the result of tightening and modification of immigration rules of the receiving countries. Over the years the receiving countries have shifted the weight of the 'points system' for immigration away from 'family reunion' to those based on 'skills and trade' qualifications restricting the flow of unskilled people.

The effect of adoption of this policy on Fiji is the outflow of skilled and professional persons which has negatively impacted on human resource development of the country. While professional and skill emigration has a

negative impact on Fiji it benefits countries like Australia and New Zealand, who are eager to accept the trained and knowledgeable Fijians. Thus they know that their aid programmes (Ausaid and NZOD) are not wasted, ultimately these countries end up benefitting from them.

Canada

At the end of World War II, Canada became a haven to immigrants because of its relaxed immigration policy. Selection did not depend on race, nationality and ethnicity. For the Indo-Fijians, Canada was one of the most important destinations when large-scale emigration began in the early 1960s.

Before independence, Indo-Fijians were British subjects, therefore migration to Canada was not subject to strict regulation. (Before independence they carried British passports, but had *Colony of Fiji* printed on it).

Canada's 1976 Immigration Act and the Immigration Regulation of 1978 recognised three basic classes of migrants: *family class, selected workers class and refugees* (Fawcett and Carino 1987:238). The family class includes the proximate kin of Canadian resident, including children, parents and other close relatives. Today's Indo-Fijian emigration is primarily on the grounds of family re-union. This is known as 'chain migration'.

'Chain migration' is initiated when 'a recent immigrant who has permanent resident status applies for the immigration of his wife, his minor children, and his parents. When he or she has received citizenship he or she can apply for the immigration of his adult brothers and sisters, who in turn, upon receiving permanent residence apply for the immigration of their spouses and minor children... and so on. This chain may therefore be unending (Goering 1989:799). In the case of Indo-Fijians, they continue to arrive in Canada under the family class provision.

There are about 12,000 Indo-Fijians in Canada and over 7,500 live in Vancouver metropolitan area. This figure is taken from Buchignani's work in 1980, there would certainly be many more who have joined their relatives in the last 20 years). According to the *Gazette* (5 June 2000 via internet), Canada's Indo-Fijian population has risen to 80,000 in recent years.

The United States of America

The entry of Indo-Fijians into the United States of America began in 1965 with an amendment of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 that set up quotas for the Asia-Pacific Triangle (Fawcett & Carino 1987:111).

Indo-Fijians continue to join family members as 'chain' migrants or as qualified independent applicants. A combination of these two options is possible and recently, scores of Fiji citizens have emigrated to the United States as a result of winning 'green card lotteries'. Howard Betts, First Secretary at the US Embassy in Suva reported that last year over 50,000 applications were received under the visa lottery programme (*Fiji Sun*, June 1,2001).

Others simply enter the United States of America on visitors permit and overstay. The American Embassy confirmed that thousands of Fiji citizens were abusing their visitors visa by working illegally in the United States. A more worrying development is the alleged involvement of many Fiji citizens in swindling money from their American employers. The report said illegal workers mostly work as attendants or home assistants and are paid lower wages far below the minimum allowed in the United States. Such positions are used to gain trust of elderly Americans and then abusing that trust by stealing from them. (*Fiji Sun*, June 1, 2001).

A recent announcement on Radio *Navtrang* (29 April 2001) called on overstayers who arrived in the United States before 22 December 2000 to come forward and an amnesty would be granted. The message also said that families from Fiji should call their relatives in America to come forward and benefit from the amnesty period. (Thirteen people from Wainasasa would also benefit from this

announcement which shows that many Indo-Fijians are overstaying their permits in America).

This announcement may have been because of the backlog in processing of applications at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The following message was passed onto me from the American Embassy in Suva.

> *INS STRUGGLES TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS IN A TIMELY FASHION*
> *With a 50 per cent increase in applications from fiscal year 1994 to fiscal year 2000, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is struggling to provide immigrants with timely decisions on their applications for naturalization and legal permanent residence. The INS has stated that it does not know how long it takes to process aliens' applications because its servicewide automated systems contain unreliable data and its districts lack automated systems for tracking many types of applications. A recent physical inventory of pending applications revealed that about 767,000 out of almost 3 million applicants with applications pending as of September 30, 2000 had been waiting at least 21 months for INS to process their applications. INS officials point to several factors contributing to the backlogs and the lengthy processing times: insufficient staff; lack of an automated case management and tracking system for many types of applications; and the need to resubmit criminal history checks to the FBI because the FBI results are only valid for 15 months, while the INS process often takes longer than that.*

Fiji has been caught up in this process and at the moment they are processing applications lodged in 1989, two years after the coups of 1987. My inquiries reveal that Indo-Fijians do not mind the wait and remain hopeful they would be able to join loved ones one day.

Australia

In the case of Australia, severe immigration restrictions, popularly known as the *White Australia Policy;* imposed between 1897 and 1902 were progressively dismantled between 1966 and 1973. Indo-Fijians could not be left out. They too became victims of the racist immigration policies. The famous case of Nancy Prasad of the 1960s, is frequently remembered by the Indo-Fijians. One extract regarding this case is attached below.

According to a UNESCO (1996) report, the major reasons for abandoning the racist policy was because the Australian leaders have moved away from dependence on Britain and the United States of America and recognised the key role of linkages within the Asia-Pacific region. This drastically increased the number of Asian-Pacific peoples in Australia

When it attained office in late 1972 the Whitlam Labor government announced, that 'Australian immigration policy would be completely free of any discrimination on ground of race, skin, colour or nationality'. Since 1973, therefore, there has been little or no discrimination on ethnic grounds against those seeking entry under refugee and special humanitarian; family reunion; general eligibility and special eligibility.

An extract from the case of 'Nancy Prasad'.

(Source: The *Fiji Times*, August 7, 1965)

NEWS OF RETURN OF NANCY PRASAD SURPRISES MOTHER

At 7pm a little Indian girl whom Australia does not want will be put on board an aircraft for Fiji. She is Nancy Prasad, aged 6, who is being deported on the order of the Federal Minister of Immigration (Mr Hubert Opperman) after a long legal battle by her sister and brother-in-law, who have tried to kep the child in Australia.

Nancy spent her last night in Australia at the house of her relative, Mr and Mrs Reg Powditch, of Globe, a Sydney.. Her suitcase lay packed in the hall while she slept with her rag doll. The Immigration Department has ruled that Nancy must return to her parents, who were returned to Fiji from Australia as prohibited immigrants two years ago.

'Nancy knows she is leaving us tomorrow', her sister Mrs Shashi Pwoditch said. 'She cried tonight before we put her to bed', said Mrs Powditch, 'and so did we'. Mrs Powditch and her Australian husband, a 23 year old panel-beater, have been trying for nearly two years to keep Nancy. They applied to the court to adopt her in an attempt to prevent her deportation. But in June the full Supreme Court upheld Mr Justice Myers's refusal to agree to the adoption and so now Nancy must go. 'Its terrible', her sister said today. 'This talk of doing away with Australia's 'White Australia' policy is not going to mean much now'. Nancy's father, a 50 year-old carpenter, brought his family to Australia in 1962, on a tourist visa. But when he and his family were told to leave after their permits had expired in 1963 Nancy was allowed to say .

Figure 4.6b shows that the majority of emigrants from Fiji are making Australia their new home. They find the easiest method for them is by qualifying for entry under the 'points system'. Those who gain the most points are the highly skilled and the most qualified. Such a policy is the cause of 'brain drain' in Fiji and the continuing political instability is likely to 'push' more from this group of people in future.

According to Australian Immigration Statistics report, (2001) Fiji-born in Australia have been one of the fastest growing groups in recent years, with an average annual growth rate of 10 per cent between the 1981 and 1986 censuses and 17 per cent between the 1986 and 1991 census. The 1991 census recorded 30,100 Fiji-born. This growth was promoted by a large outflow following the first military coup in 1987. During the unrest, which followed, Australia received an influx of

Indo-Fijians, many of whom sought refugee status. Settler arrivals from Fiji have diminished from a peak of 2980 in 1987-1988 to approximately 1500 per annum. Fijians are the largest population in Australia from the Pacific region, excluding New Zealand.

In the 1996 census, the second generation of Fiji-born parentage numbered 16,638, approximately 20,469 less than the Fiji born. Adding this to the number of Fiji born gives an estimated community size of 53,745 people in Australia. Of these 50.2 per cent spoke Hindi, 26.1 per cent English and 11.1 per cent Fijian in their homes. 15,409 persons practiced Hinduism, 4,436 Islam and 4,248 Catholicism. The figures confirm the size of Indo-Fijians in Australia compared to other groups.

New Zealand

New Zealand is a traditional immigrant country that built up its population through immigration from Britain, with racially-selective entry policies to keep out non-Europeans. However, since the 1950s, economic and political links with nearby Pacific Islands have given rise to new inflows. There was considerable immigration from Tonga, the Cook Islands and other Pacific islands in the 1960s. and 1970 (Trlin 1987).

The presence of Indo-Fijians in New Zealand was a result of the expansionary phase of the post-war period. Fiji was the most consistent supplier of workers on contract in New Zealand under the terms of the South Pacific Work Permit Scheme. People from Fiji were encouraged to emigrate as an important element of unskilled workers under the scheme.

Beginning in the 1960s, hundreds of unskilled labourers undertook scrub cutting and land development work in New Zealand for a maximum period of 4 months per year. This scheme was arranged at the government to government level, an example of a *macro-structure* of the 'migrations systems theory' discussed in chapter two. There were strict conditions attached to the scheme and the majority of the emigrants came back to Fiji. However, the emigrants found the short-term labour scheme very attractive and tried to cheat the rigid scheme, to gain an entry several times during the year and work illegally. Many people were prosecuted for the fraudulent activity.

Economic crisis and a high annual net migration gain (33,200 people) in the year ended 31 March 1974, made immigration an emotive election issue (UNESCO 1996:15). This led to a decline in Indo-Fijian emigration to New Zealand, as immigration became a critical political issue in 1975.

The term 'overstayer' became a signifier for Pacific Island immigrants. Migrants from the Pacific were portrayed 'as a threat to law and order', responsible for the

deterioration of certain inner city and state housing areas and as competing with New Zealand jobs. Later in 1975, much stricter controls over immigration were introduced.

However, the SPWPS continued until Rabuka's 1987 coups that disrupted the country's established links with New Zealand. Gradually other links were re-established but not this scheme that was so important for the Indo-Fijians.

The New Zealand Immigration Service reported (*Fiji Times* , 27 April 1998) that while before the coups less than 200 people were approved for residence in New Zealand annually, in 1987 the figure jumped to 1577, then to 3874 the following year, and totalled 4513 for the next two years, dropping to less than 1000 after that. In the last financial year 919 people were approved for residence with about three-quarters being approved under family and humanitarian categories. Over 650 residence applications were denied and there were 663 overstayers in New Zealand.

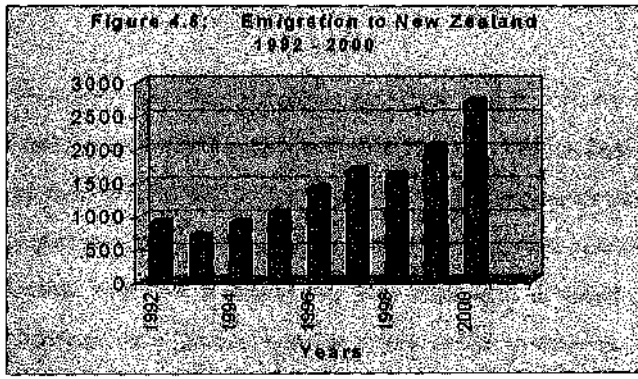
These overstayers may have entered New Zealand under the short-lived experiment with visa-free entry for visitors during the Christmas holidays in 1986/87. Fears of large numbers of 'overstayers' at the end of the Christmas holidays prompted the New Zealand Immigration Service to abandon visa-waiver for citizens of Fiji on 17 February 1987. I have personal knowledge that many

Indo-Fijians who arrived in New Zealand under this scheme did not return to Fiji. They either married New Zealand citizens or simply overstayed.

In 1991, the 'points system' similar to that operated in Australia was introduced. The impact of the points system, coupled with a tight labour market for semi-skilled and unskilled workers' reduced net emigration from Pacific substantially. However, this policy did not have an effect on skilled Indo-Fijians who intended to arrive in New Zealand. The professionally qualified must now be registered with the relevant body in New Zealand for assessment of their points to meet the standards required to practice in New Zealand. This applies to 25 specialist occupations notably doctors and dentists.

It has been estimated that 500 to 600 immigrants are unable to practise as doctors in New Zealand despite gaining residency status. A large number of nurses bound for New Zealand now sit special exams organised by the New Zealand High Commission before they lodge their application for permanent residence. In effect, this means that the government has re-introduced a much higher level of selectivity in immigration policy. The various selection criteria have been standardised across the business investment and general categories and greater emphasis has been placed on skills and settlement factors which are considered to be relevant to New Zealand's development.

Table 4.8 shows the number of people granted permanent residence in New Zealand from 1993 to 2000. From 1993 the number declined until 1995, then it gradually began to increase from 1996 and jumped two-fold in the year 2000.



Source: New Zealand High Commission, Suva.

New Zealand like Australia has been highly critical of the 2000 coup and approved permanent residence for 244 persons on humanitarian grounds in the year 2000. Included in this is *Chandrika Prasad* who took the caretaker government to court claiming that the 1997 Constitution had not been abrogated after the 2000 civil takeover.

Of the 2707 applications approved in the year 2000, 1233 were based on general skills. Apparently New Zealand like Australia is now the recipient of skilled and most educated emigrants from Fiji.

Summary

This chapter discussed the level, direction and composition of Indo-Fijian emigrants. I have highlighted the dramatic increase in emigration in the wake of the two military coups of 1987 and the coup of 2000. The analysis has shown that political instability is the major cause of increased emigration from Fiji.

Most contemporary Indo-Fijian emigrants are highly skilled. The demand for particular categories of skilled workforce in countries such as New Zealand and Australia confirms that Fiji will lose thousands of skilled personnel that will affect the quality of economic development. The continuous emigration of Indo-Fijians from the 1960s has built a significantly large population of Indo-Fijians in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. These factors combined with the continuing political uncertainty in Fiji imply that emigration of Indo-Fijians is likely to be maintained and most probably increase the current level of emigration.

The next chapter discusses my findings on the local area and relates the theory to the research site.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SETTLEMENT OF WAINASASA – THE CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses two things: First it provides the background to my study and study area. Secondly the 'migration systems theory' mentioned in chapter two is applied in the case of *Wainasasa*. It provides a bridge between the global and general issues discussed in chapter two and in chapter six.

The aim is to move from the larger to the smaller scene by discussing *Wainasasa* and showing how emigration is initiated and influenced by national or larger concerns.

REASON FOR CHOICE OF SITE

First, Wainasasa became my own settlement area upon marriage. In conducting this research, I found my familiarity with the settlement a great asset, as rural people are very suspicious of outsiders. As a participant observer, I have had the opportunity to acquire many important insights into the rural lifestyle and problems associated with it. I drew on my personal knowledge and experience of the community.

Secondly, I have personally observed the gradual depletion of Indo-Fijian population over the last 20 years which has led to the presence of other ethnic groups here.

Thirdly, frequent conversations reveal the number of people who have emigrated. Usually in cases of death, cremations are delayed while waiting for immediate family members to arrive. Marriages and even community projects like religious activities are arranged in consultation with those resident overseas. Occasional community and family gathering gossips also reveal the amount of people taking holidays overseas. Rural people take pride in revealing about family members taking trips overseas.

Fourthly, all land in Wainasasa is freehold land', there is no problem of insecurity of land tenure yet the residents of Wainasasa are leaving. Some of them have

not looked back on the property left behind. This shows that there would be a greater 'push' on the Indo-Fijians in other parts of Fiji, who are tenants on 'native land'.

Lastly, there have been very little work done on re-settled *girmitiya* and their children in the rural areas. They face many problems, which need to be addressed. The volume of emigration to developed nations indicates that they have been ignored and have been trying to build their life elsewhere since the late 1950s.

BACKGROUND

Wainasasa lies on the banks of Rewa River, approximately 10 kilometres from Nausori town in the south-east of the island of *Viti Levu*. Access is via Kings Road then Nadruloulou Road, along 5 kilometres of gravel surface. The roads were constructed in the late 19th century by Pacific island labourers[17] supplied by 'blackbirders'. Although the road has been widened to cater for the growing volume of traffic, there is a desperate need for frequent maintenance.

The importance of this area can be traced by the presence of the first courthouse in Fiji near *Kasavu* village. Oral traditions reveal many cases of murder, suicide, rape and other criminal trials were held during the indenture period. Unfortunately, no effort is made to preserve these historical sites. Almost all government quarters are now occupied by the villagers.

The settlement is situated on an undulating land with easy to moderate flats consisting of brownish clay soil. Valuers rate it as 'third class grazing land' (Fairview Valuation No. 232/93). Most of the areas are cleared, but parts of it are under secondary growth. It frequently rains on this side of the island and floods often affect the area.

[17] This information was supplied to me in a previous research by the people of *Kalekana*, in Lami near Suva. They are descendants of Solomon Islanders who were brought to Fiji prior to Indian labourers.

There is no organized pattern of settlement. Houses are scattered on the best sites. Patches of barren land, jungles, deserted houses, small vegetable farms, poultry farms and some beautifully kept houses are seen. The residents of Wainasasa enjoy a regular bus service, electricity, telephone connection and reticulated water supply.

Wainasasa is a pioneer settlement of 'freed' indentured Indian labourers. The history of the settlement begins with the arrival in Fiji of indentured labourers from India. Today the experiences of this community reflect the present lifestyle of the peri-rural Indo-Fijian community more generally because very few of the present generation continue with the traditional occupation of farming. The subject of emigration is not new for these people. They started to move when external forces first threatened their economic and political well-being.

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Australia developed Wainasasa upon request by the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon. The CSR established the Nausori town in 1879 where it built its first sugar mill. Nausori became the site of the first settlement of *indentured* Indians in Fiji.

Wainasasa represents a classic case of land alienation in Fiji. This parcel of land was a 'freehold' property of planters, Maurice Scott and Mr Barbar that was awarded to them as Crown grants before the *Deed of Cession* was signed (Oral tradition – I could not obtain written records on the original ownership).

The present residents are descendants of the original 14 'freed' *girmitiya* who were tenants of Mr Scott and Mr Barbar. As time passed, the tenants were given the opportunity to buy the land. According to one oral source, their 'freehold' land (20 hectares) was purchased in 1933 for three hundred pounds. However, the mortgage could not be cleared in their time. Not only is this true for the this family but most of the original purchasers could not clear their debts and it was passed onto their children.

Forming of Community

Free Indians faced a formidable task in laying the foundations of a sense of community amongst themselves. Resettlement is always a difficult process but the task of organizing the plantation provided a medium for daily interaction, which may have encouraged the formation of the Wainasasa community.

While under indenture, the CSR abused the labourers to obtain the maximum profit. But as soon as indentures expired, freed Indians were no longer prepared to work under the same conditions. The CSR was finding it difficult to have a consistent supply of labour. Therefore, in 1908, the company started a policy of leasing portions of land to selected officers, which disposed of a considerable area. They hoped that this way of organizing land and labour would work to

greater advantage, putting the business on a sounder and more enduring basis. Consequently Wainasasa developed into a major cane growing area with the encouragement of the CSR.

The new settlers worked in mutual aid teams, where six or seven households would pool their labour and equipment at sowing and harvesting seasons. This system generally did not involve the exchange of cash, which was scarce anyway. On rare occasions, a few better-off residents hired labour but the usual system was like cooperative labour working independently for the CSR company.

The first settlers took up residence in lower parts of Wainasasa and some continue to live here, close to the road. However, due to the risk of floods (the worse ones being in 1964, 1972 and 1993), most people prefer to build their houses on elevated sites, which are also more attractive locations. The houses remain scattered as before, since the best sites are chosen right across the large patches of land available. The typical pattern today is of a house or group of houses belonging to one extended family, with a small compound immediately surrounded by land lying fallow. The settlement formed neighbourhood clusters but usually a family is separated from the others.

Demographics of the Settlement

The first settlers were former indentured workers, since then the proportion of Fiji-born Indians in Wainasasa has increased to the point that now all of them are Fiji-born. Most of the early immigrants were married men, but indications are that there was a shortage of women. This disparity was largely due to the practice adopted during the indenture period to bring only 40 women for every 100 men recruited from India. To this day, jocular gossiping reveals the adulterous relations of men and women in the settlement in earlier times.

As the population increased, the gender ratio became more balanced. Since it was a pioneer settlement the population consisted mainly of young adults, with few children and almost no old people. In time this situation also normalized and today the age distribution of the Wainasasa population is similar to that of other developing countries.

There is no written record of early demographic figures. Even now Wainasasa is not enumerated separately by census probably because of its small size and remote location. Consequently, no official information on the composition of the population is available. However, my own survey in 1998 shows 365 people live here. Since then five families have left the area through emigration. There have been three deaths, and five births. Only three persons have joined the community after they were displaced by the rebellious activity in Tailevu during

the civil takeover on 19 May 2000. Clearly the Indo-Fijian population in this area is declining.

TRENDS IN EMIGRATION FROM WAINASASA

Structural forces initially determined the settlement and consequent emigration from Wainasasa. Later circumstances dominated in their decisions for emigrate. Both personal reasons and structural forces influence each other as individual decisions are often based on the opportunities available elsewhere.

From the 1860s, commercial cultivation based on the plantation system ran pretty smoothly until 1916, when immigration of Indian indentured labourers to Fiji was terminated. Under immense pressure, all existing indentures were cancelled by 1 January 1920. It marked the beginning of problems on plantations. There were acute labour shortages and industrial troubles, followed by a sudden and disastrous decline in sugar prices. The CSR and the independent planters were not able to work their estates because most of the free Indians were not prepared to work for the CSR any longer.

Indenture for the Indians was *narak* (hell), but the suffering taught them the value of hard work, which Ali (1980) described as a *'baptism of fire'*. However, the fact

to consider was that the contract of indenture was only for five years for each individual after which there was freedom and opportunity to seek in a new land without the economic restraints of caste-laden India.

Life for the Indians ran pretty smoothly until the late 1920s. However, in the 1930s they faced economic difficulties brought about by the Great Depression. During this period many farmers were under a lot of debt, but the community survived without much movement or activity.

Cyclic Movement

World War II was a turning point for Wainasasa as the farmers' visions were widened economically and their expectations increased. Most men left their farms to work elsewhere which marked the beginning of the *cyclic movement* in Wainasasa. People enjoyed working for the soldiers because they introduced many modern commodities and were a very good source of cash income. Others shifted from dependence on sugar to other forms of subsistence farming.

Wainasasa's economy expanded rapidly when the war ended. Nausori, where the CSR mill was situated, became a good source of employment and a market for the farmers' produce. Improvement in transport facilities encouraged some younger men to find employment in Suva, the capital city of Fiji, about 29

kilometres away from Wainasasa. Many other agencies, such as *Gujarati* shopkeepers and the government also provided employment. With the increasing complexity and prosperity of the Fiji economy, many economic opportunities arose that boosted the *cyclic movement*, but sugar remained the major income earner for the majority.

However, in 1959 the CSR closed the Nausori mill largely due to the decline in sugar production. This was because of the excessive rain in the southern part of the island of *Viti Levu*. The officials believed that the wet weather was no longer viable for the sugar industry. The closure caused havoc in the community because many farmers were still under debt.

The community which had just settled by collecting its 'bits and pieces' of culture and traditions was left virtually on their own resources. As mentioned earlier the *sasu/bahu* relationship bounded the colonial government and the CSR Company and the government did not bother much about the survival of the *children of girmitiya*. The insecurity, which brought their ancestors to Fiji, applied to the first generation Indians as well. The closure of the mill became a major cause of emigration. They started looking for other sources of income.

Periodic Movements

After sugar cane farming was shifted, many young males traveled seasonally to the west of the island during the cane harvesting seasons to work on the sugar farms again. Others went to build the infrastructure. These movements did not continue for long as many realized that cash cropping and other activities brought better income. One elderly respondent said:

> *The Company's departure was a blessing in disguise, we were seeing real money. Income was received on a weekly basis, we did not have to wait for the 'great day - the cane payment'*

International Emigration

The first person emigrated from Wainasasa in 1957. He went to England as a tourist and did not return. However, the most important movement, began in 1964, when the 'macro-structure' of the *South Pacific Work Permit Scheme* of New Zealand was introduced.

This scheme became very popular for the young men of Wainasasa. It gave them an opportunity to travel in an aeroplane and visit a country developed by Europeans. Most Indo-Fijians at that time regarded Europeans as a 'superior race' and visiting New Zealand was a privilege. Once they returned from working

as labourers on farms, their conversations were full of praise. My uncle who visited New Zealand five times, his impression of New Zealand was expressed as such:

> *U desh me to makhi bechtai, Butter tibil pe bahai do ek chuti bhi nai lege. Moka lagta to hum ruk jata. Gora ke desh hai ne, bahut chikan hai.*
>
> *(In that country even flies slide. Throw butter on the table no ants touch it. If I had the chance, I would have stayed back. It is gora (whitemens' land, therefore very clean)*
>
> *(Translated by the author)*

These short-term labour migrants borrowed 65 pounds from moneylenders and families to pay for the airfares. In 4 months, each labourer earned an average of 300 pounds which was an excellent pay compared to what they earned in Fiji. Some youths travelled as much as 7 to 8 times. One respondent stated:

> *I bribed the officials and gave them $50 to obtain visa. If we went on a tourist visa it was illegal to work, so we dressed up on coat and pants to look like a Sahib and no one questioned where we were going.*

As mentioned earlier this scheme was a controlled labour migration with strict rules. No one person was allowed to enter New Zealand more than once in a year. However, oral sources reveal that many people went on a tourist visa and worked illegally in New Zealand[18]. Respondents indicated 'fowls and ducks'

[18] There was a restriction on taking New Zealand currency out of the country. The respondents said that the illegal immigrants hid their earning in their shoes when they travelled back to Fiji.

were given to government officials to obtain visas because 'it was very difficult for them to find employment at that time in Fiji'.

Times may have been difficult as is shown in the following *Fiji Times* (8 August 1965) article. It proves that many people tried to obtain visas and passports through illegal means.

Those who could not obtain work permits went as tourists. A respondent had been to New Zealand 6 times said:

> *Before I left for New Zealand, I paid five pounds (which was big money at that time – two weeks pay) for a suit. I was a visitor and not allowed to work. Therefore, I wore a suit so that no one could suspect that I was a poor man walking the streets of New Zealand in search of work.*
> *Sometimes I felt that the New Zealand government officials were aware of visitors working illegally but not much effort was made to apprehend them.*

It was difficult to overstay in New Zealand at that time and one respondent said:

> *If I had the chance, I would have stayed permanently in New Zealand. It was easy work and good pay as farm labourers. But they made it so difficult. We went in lots and were collected by the farmer at the airport. He took our passports on arrival and handed it over to us when we were returning to Fiji. These measures were taken because a lot of workers had run away from his farm.*

(The *Fiji Times*, 8 August 1965: 3)

FOUR MEN FINED TOTAL OF FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS FOR PASSPORT -PERMIT OFFENCES

Fines totalling four hundred pounds were imposed on four men at the Nadi court house for offences involving the forging of Fiji passports and landing permits for New Zealand. The men, all from Suva, are Hari Bhajan, Uhinram, Ram Singh and Chandra Dip. They pleaded guilty to the charges before the senior magistrate., who imposed a fine of hundred pounds, in default 3 months imprisonment, in each case.

All four men said they had obtained their permits through a Suva Travel agency and knew nothing of the forgeries. Bhajan was charged with having in his possession on July 24 this year with lawful authority, a forged passport.....

Only one person from Wainasasa managed to overstay in New Zealand. He later married a *Maori* woman to gain permanent residence. This respondent told me that he still misses Fiji and was thinking of returning home but frequent disturbance on the political scene makes him rethink whether he should come back. In 1987 only one of his sister's and a brother joined him when New Zealand's labour government announced a 'visa free' access for a short time during the Christmas holidays in 1986/87. No other family members could qualify to enter New Zealand because of the stringent immigrant policy requirements.

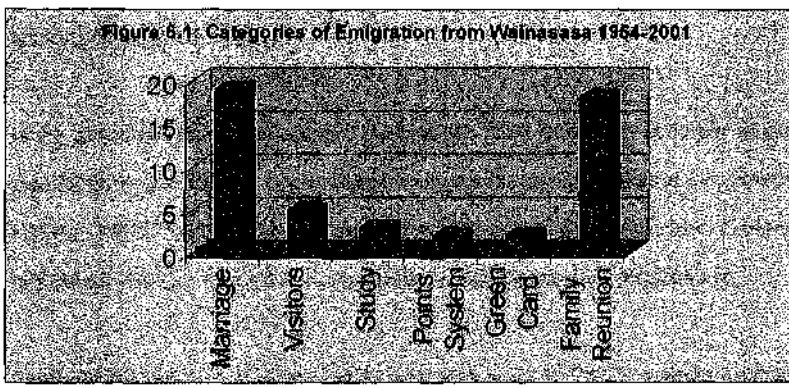
The 1987 short term free visa access saw hundreds of single Indo-Fijian males and females enter New Zealand. This access was immediately cancelled when the government saw the huge influx of people from Fiji and other Pacific islands. However many of them were able to gain permanent residence either through marriage or via the policy of pardon for the overstayers.

The salient issue is that the *South Pacific Work Permit Scheme* exposed the emigrants to a western style of living. This was the initial stage when they observed the opportunities available in developed nations. Because of this exposure, some tried to escape to other destinations, such as Canada and the United States of America with the money they earned in New Zealand. Almost all of them were single men. The immigration policies of these countries enabled the emigrants to stay permanently. After 10-15 years of residence in the host country they became legible to sponsor their relatives in the 'chain migration process'. As a result some whole families have gone and many others are still waiting for their chance.

With the presence of a large of number of Indo-Fijians in the United States and Canada, marriages are frequently arranged with Fiji residents. A number of people have entered these countries on marriage grounds as well. Skilled and professional emigration criteria have not been very popular among the residents of Wainasasa. The obvious reason is the presence of a large number of families in Canada and United States of America. This does not mean that the skilled and professionals do not emigrate, they do but under the 'family re-union category'.

Figure 5.1 shows that the actual process of migration. Various categories of emigration were adopted to initiate the process. Of these 11 families went to

Canada, 12 to United States of America, 4 to Australia and 3 to New Zealand. The figure shows the importance of marriage and family re-union categories in the research site in regards to emigration.



Source: Author

Characteristics of Emigrants

During the 1960s, most of the original migrants were young males, who emigrated in search of a employment. As mentioned earlier during this period they were in a desperate situation because the colonial government virtually

offered no assistance when the CSR shifted the economy activity of sugar production to the west of Fiji.

According to the survey, it is clear that the majority of the contemporary emigrants from Wainasasa are from all age groups. The highly trained professionals emigrating under the family re-union category do not need to state their professional skills. Skilled persons' pass a point's test based on skills, age and English language ability.

In the 'chain' emigration all age groups qualify. Most emigrants continue to join their family members in a 'chain migration' process especially bound for Canada and the United States. Therefore the shift in direction of emigration from Canada to Australia (Fig 4.7 a,b) did not much effect on emigrants from Wainasasa.

There were a number of young males who also went to Pacific Islands such as the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides (Vanuatu) as labour migrants. One went to Papua New Guinea as well. All of them returned to Fiji upon completion of their term. The response was that the conditions and terms of employment in these countries were not too attractive.

Summary

This chapter briefly discussed the history of the research site. I looked at the forming of community and demographics of settlement.

Then I discussed the trends in emigration. It showed why people started to move and how their emigration was initiated. Different types of movements i.e. cyclic, periodic and international were focussed on. The characteristics of emigrates was also discussed.

The next chapter presents the findings of the research in Wainasasa.

CHAPTER SIX

EMIGRATION OF THE CHILDREN OF *GIRMITIYA* FROM WAINASASA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The data was collected by the methods described in chapter one.

It presents why the children of *girmitiya* emigrate. It focuses on return migration, the future trend of emigration and then looks at the effect of emigration and its implications for Fiji.

WHY DO CHILDREN OF *GIRMITIYA* EMIGRATE?

The decision to emigrate is often based on the opportunities available elsewhere. The survey shows that personal reasons and structural forces create a 'push' factor under which a decision to move is made.

A range of responses was collected, when former residents of Fiji were asked why they left Fiji. The most frequently cited reason was insecurity due to political instability. Wainasasa was not a crime prone area until the coups of 1987 but things have changed since. Two houses and a shop were burnt down during the crisis and since then terrorism has not stopped in Wainasasa. Frequent stoning and stealing continued and escalated during the 2000 takeover of Parliament.

Other reasons for leaving were the desire to join family members, lack of job opportunities, low salary, further education, secure better future for their children, better medical facilities, inefficient police and judiciary and abuse of human rights especially during crisis. These are the major reasons that have created a push factor. Figure 6.1 shows some of negative and positive points of emigration that were collected from the respondents.

Figure 6.1: Advantages/Disadvantages of Emigration

Positive Points	Negative Points
Good lifestyle	Difficulty find appropriate jobs
Cheap food and good choice	High interest on loans
Quality houses	Miss family
Employment opportunities	Expensive living
Good income	
Political stability	
Educational opportunity	
Respect for democracy	
Good governance	
Respect for human rights	
Freedom of religion	
Strong judiciary and police	
Better status for women	

The following responses obtained from those interviewed indicate the problems that Indo-Fijians face in Fiji's unstable environment.

> *I emigrated to have a peaceful life for my family and me and to utilize my education and qualification with advanced technology. Since the 1987 coups, Fiji's situation was very unstable, people were getting unemployed, daily crimes increased and the fear of each Indo-Fijian with these unstability was uncertain. The fear of unsettled life was grinding on everyone's mind and people often were thinking of what would happen next. The education at school was dooming and students were missing their studies a lot. With my favourable age and qualification, I was in the position during that time (1995) to pass a points test in the criteria of migration to Australia. I would never regret for the move I took and my family and I enjoy our peaceful life here.*

Another respondent states why she emigrated to New Zealand:

> *I emigrated for two reasons: first my husband had to finish his masters before the age of 30 which was one of the requirements at the university. Secondly, the first coup was very frightening especially when our house was raided under the barrel of the gun.*

Both these respondents of Australia and New Zealand see the country as land of opportunities for advancement in terms of better education for children and self. These countries were perceived as politically, economically and socially stable, where human rights are respected. Both the respondents were young, educated and skilled people.

However, in the case of respondents from Canada and the United States different reasons were given. A respondent from Canada said:

> *I have gone old, no one is left in Fiji here to look after me. All my children live in America. Though I will miss Fiji, but I must stay here because medical facilities are better there and all my children will support me financially.*

Another respondent from the United States said:

I emigrated because I have lived with my youngest son all my life, he was moving so I decided to join him. All my other sons and daughters are living very well in America and it is better for my younger son to join them too. There is too much problem in Fiji. Thieves come around just about every second day, but when we call the police they make an excuse, there is no transport. It is very frightening to live alone.

Both these respondents are in their mid 50s and 60s. It is clear from the response of migrants to Canada and the United States, about the importance of the family bond within the Indo-Fijian community. Although they have emotional attachment with Fiji they feel too insecure to stay here any longer. More people emigrate to these countries in the 'chain' migration process than to Australia and New Zealand.

When respondents were asked about the presence of racism and discrimination in the society, one respondent said:

I as an Indian have been discriminated by the government policies on education and business. On both issues, government gives priorities to Fijians and Rotumans first and then considers Indians.

Comments about the host society was different:

There is no virtually discrimination and racism. The people over here in Brisbane are so helpful, kind, humble and always prepared to help anyone no matter of what colour, race or religion one belongs to. It is also against the law to discriminate at any race.

Another respondent felt different about racial discrimination in New Zealand. He said:

> *This is a hard question, it depends on individual circumstances. Some people have had difficulties especially when they apply for jobs, though I haven't experienced this.*

The research showed that there was a stronger feeling to emigrate among the Indo-Fijian women than Indo-Fijian men. The most frequently cited reason was the persistence of patriarchal control and the feeling of insecurity created by the political instability.

The Indian society is a patriarchal society. Normally the woman is recognised through her husband. In a rural set-up most women do not go out to work. They are expected to maintain their home and small farms. They only move around to certain locations for instance, town or visiting families with the consent of their husbands. In crisis situations the husbands do not allow their wives to go anywhere alone, thus the patriarchal control gets stronger.

Indo-Fijian women are fascinated by the progress the women make when they emigrate. Most of them become drivers and own cars. They buy good houses which they boast about. Many of them frequently come back to display their changed behaviours and possessions. Their timid looks disappear and they

become more vocal. One respondent in New Zealand says these changes have been possible because:

> *Women are second to none in Australia. Women of any race or culture are treated as locals and they have equal rights and opportunities. With their education and qualifications they have equal rights to occupy any position in any field. Women over here are employed from labourers to the decision making in the Parliament.*

Another's response shows that in the countries of immigration patriarchy still persists for some despite them finding a job with equal pay:

> *All women here have equal employment opportunities but it is a challenge managing a full time job and family. To have a job of responsibility means a lot of extra hours of work, which is really impossible at times. Women have equal say whatever they do. There is no discrimination in pay. Women have lots more opportunities here in New Zealand in terms of studies, job opportunities and also they have agencies who help them in times of needs, for example: abuse of husband etc.*

Another response from Australia shows that social standing for some Indo-Fijian women does not improve upon emigration and blames the tradition. She says:

> *The position of women in the work and professional environment is very good and equal but on the social level it is different based upon the individual. Some are treated very well. Whereas others are not.*

Despite all the legal rights women have, not all put them to the test. I believe that a majority of Indian women accept domestic violence because either they believe they deserve it or they are afraid to speak out and stand up for their rights.
I think that tradition teaches us that men are seen to be more superior over women and therefore they (men) believe that they can treat women in which every way they wish. Being in the right manner or wrong. I think that even now in the twenty-first century really hasn't changed the perspectives of the position of women. I guess tradition is tradition and may never change. Even in the future regardless of how modernised this would get, I think that this tradition may never change.

The above view was presented to the respondents in Fiji and their response was they had to battle with three types of oppression in Fiji. First: the patriarchy, second: weak institutions (police and the justice system) and third: the 'poverty of opportunity' – 'No job, no money, no voice'. Overseas residence is still attractive because the opportunity to earn a separate income will give them liberation from patriarchy. They also felt the government was always willing to assist women in need, which is difficult to achieve in Fiji. The women felt that it is an individuals' choice whether to continue living in an abusive relationship or to find an alternative. The alternative choice they felt only could be made upon emigration but not in Fiji because of cultural and legal constraints.

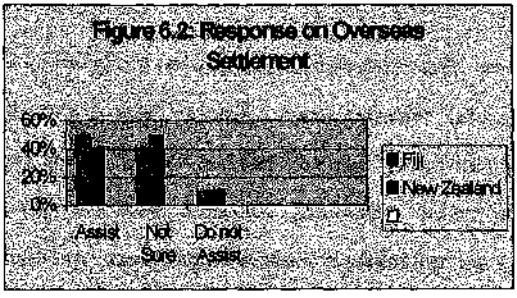
Another reason why Indo-Fijians emigrate is because of the presence of a large, intact ex Indo-Fijian community overseas. Social groups, prayer groups and

clubs have formed strong ethnic community in the countries of immigration. An emigrant related that:

> *The ethnic community is very strong. We have a number religious bodies who meet on a very regular basis. Young people are given opportunities to recite different holy books. Most people hold pooja (prayers) and kirtans (devotional hymns) on a regular basis. We have a good group of keen parents who are involved and committed in the teaching of Hindi language. People want their children to maintain their mother-tongue.*

Considering all these factors, respondents in Fiji were asked how many were intending to emigrate. Sixty per cent said they were serious in their decisions to emigrate, 30 per cent were keeping their options open and 10 per cent had no intention of emigrating. (Figure 6.2)

Most respondents felt that the political situation in Fiji would deteriorate. While appreciating this view the emigrants overseas and local Indo-Fijians were asked whether Indo-Fijians should be assisted to settle overseas. Fifty per cent of the respondents in Fiji felt they should be assisted, 40 per cent were not sure and 10 per cent felt they should not be assisted. Forty per cent of the ex-Fiji residents felt they should be assisted, 50 per cent were not sure and 10 per cent felt they should not be assisted.



Source: Author

WHY DO SOME STAY IN FIJI?

There are some children of *girmitiya* who choose to remain in Fiji. They feel that the Indo-Fijian community has enriched this country immeasurably contributing to Fiji's culture, politics, economic prosperity and social life. A typical response from 40 year old high school teacher was:

> *I think I am doing well here. I do not want any more major changes in my lifestyle and the way of living.*

Another professional respondent mentioned that:

Instability is the main factor that would dictate my decision to emigrate. Incentive to stay on in Fiji is secure job, which I have now.

The tendency to emigrate among the non-professionals was strong. The reasons given were political instability, weak economy (short working hours, wage decrease), high crime rate and discriminatory government policies towards Indo-Fijians. Only two non-professional respondents did not wish to emigrate. One did not have any close family members overseas but the second one who had her mother, brothers and sisters in Canada still did not want to emigrate because:

In foreign countries things will be more modernized and we have to work very hard to earn money. There, money is everything. People are very different there.

RETURNED EMIGRANTS

Geddes' (1987/88) argument that Indo-Fijian emigrate for material benefits (see chapter one), is not difficult to prove when visiting ex Indo-Fijians residents overseas. One would see the results of emigration. Their material possessions

include large houses, several cars and frequent overseas holidays. This of course is attained through hard work and a desire for success.

However, we tend to overlook the emotions of the emigrant experience. For example, there are many kinds of loneliness in developed nations for emigrants from a different background. There is the loneliness of being an emigrant, loneliness of a widow/widower, loneliness of being an only child, loneliness of being neglected by children at old age, this list can go on and on. These persistent aches and pains continue for many who leave their roots. No matter how bad these emotions maybe, very few choose to return permanently.

When emigrants were asked whether they missed Fiji? The majority said they did. A respondent in Australia said:

> *I miss all my family and friends (including Fijians and other races as well), neighbours, previous workmates and most of all 'our home and land' and the relaxed life.*

Another said:

> *I miss the relaxed life-style, the cheap and variety of vegetables and just the community.*

But when asked, whether they considered returning to Fiji, a female respondent replied:

I will come to Fiji to visit family but not to live.

On the other hand, the male respondent still hoped to come back. He said:

> *Considering the present situation of Fiji, not peaceful, unstable and fearful life, I would prefer to come to Fiji as a visitor only. However, if circumstances do change, upon return to democracy and equality among both races with peace and harmony, I would prefer spending the rest of my life in my motherland.*

Another respondent from Hawaii felt that she will be emotionally hurt if she visited or returned to Fiji. She said:

> *I cannot visit Fiji after Amma's (mother's) death. Grief to me is very personal and Fiji is attached to that which is most dear to me.*

The researcher's personal observation especially on widowed older women was that they had a stronger feeling to return to Fiji. In some cases children took advantage of their parents, by employing them as baby-sitters. Their movement is restricted because of their obligation of being boarders in their children's home and because of their lack of knowledge of the place. Yet they do not wish to return. When asked one said:

At least I have a secure place to stay. I would rather die under my children's eyes than to die with no one around.

However, it is evident (see Figure 6.1) that the respondents see more positive points in emigrating. No doubt, return migration is limited. Only one family from Wainasasa returned to Fiji after 7 years of residence in New Zealand. He had emigrated after the 1987 coups. The return was not initiated until he secured New Zealand citizenship for his family. He said the main reason why he returned was because:

I was offered a job with good pay in Fiji. My decision to come back depended on Fiji's return to democracy and a promise to review the racist 1990 Constitution.

There was also a pressure from my family to come back, as I was the only member of the family away from home. Another reason was that my children were growing up with 'Kiwi culture', I desperately wanted them to know Hindi. With these pressures and with Fiji returning to a form of democracy in 1992 general elections I decided to come back.

However, the environment of uncertainty in Fiji now is making the respondent think again of returning to New Zealand. But 'pulling up roots' for the second time is more difficult, he says. Like other Indo-Fijians, he also lives for his children. His hopes for a good future were shattered by the 2000 coup, ultimately if things do not improve, he may return to New Zealand.

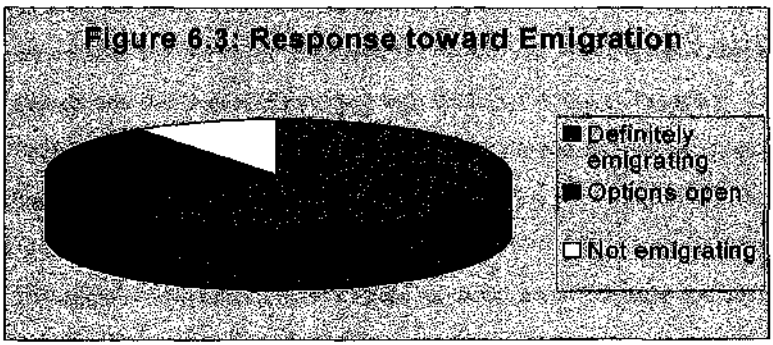
Although most Indo-Fijians are reluctant to return, they do not hesitate to actively stress their 'Fijian identity' in their new homes. While in Australia and New Zealand, I noted the desire to dress in Fijian style 'bula' shirts by both ex Indo-Fijian males and females. They openly display their 'Fijianness' with car number plates as 'Fiji' or 'Bula' or 'Namaste' and their homes are full of things Fijian, ranging from wall hangings, pots and pans to Fijian style mats and brooms. Similar observation was also made by Buchignani on Indo-Fijians in Canda.

Indian family structures largely remain intact when Indo-Fijians emigrate. The second generation are constantly being socialised and raised to maintain their Fijian identity. Even their diet is controlled to a point that one meal must have an Indo-Fijian flavour. It is difficult to assess how long will this continue, but it seems as long as the association continues with Fiji, the feeling of 'Fijianness' will remain even though their return may not eventuate.

FUTURE TREND OF EMIGRATION

Most of the respondents' felt that Fiji's political and economic situation will further deteriorate that will be force people to look for stable environment elsewhere. When questioned most respondents were intending to emigrate. Sixty per cent were seriously thinking of emigrating, 30 per cent were keeping

their options open, only ten per cent of respondents said they had no intention of emigrating (Figure 6.3).



Source: Author

EFFECTS OF EMIGRATION ON WAINASASA

Driving through Wainasasa, one would notice neglected farmlands and deserted houses. One property owner deserted in the late 1960s, has been on the market since. The whole family now lives in United States and Canada. Recently it has been cleaned and is now occupied by an evicted family from Tailevu.

Another property bought by an indigenous Fijian is also being ignored as he hardly stays there, most of his time is spent in his village. Yet another house and a large piece of land has been on the market for the last 10 years since all the family members live in Australia. A number of houses are looked after by

extended family members because the original owners remain overseas. Such is the situation in Wainasasa.

In the small settlement of Wainasasa anyone would notice that it is being gradually depopulated. No one family is left without a relative overseas. If they are not able to emigrate to developed nations such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, they look for opportunities to escape to other Pacific Island countries. A couple of families from Wainasasa have emigrated to the island Kingdom of Tonga.

The extent of emigration is clearly visible on occasions of marriage and deaths. Wedding dates these days are set in consultation with those resident overseas. It has been noticed that the brides, grooms and immediate family members dress in clothing imported from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and India. Normally the clothes are brought by those resident overseas. Indian weddings appear to be an expansive global affair now, as family members do not hesitate to join those in Fiji.

Similarly in cases of deaths, funeral arrangements are also deferred for family members to arrive. In some cases it takes as much as 4-5 days. With the community support any inconvenience is usually overcome. (In Hindu tradition the family is not allowed to light a fire and cook until the corpse is cremated).

Recently there has been the problem of overcrowding at the mortuaries in all the hospitals around Fiji. This is one of the reasons why the mortuaries have had an overcrowding problem. There is talk of charging for storage of bodies, which will affect mostly the Indo-Fijian community.

A major problem faced by families resident in Fiji is that the foreign embassies are very reluctant to issue visas for family members to attend funerals and wedding overseas. The embassies have been facing the problem of people not returning and these precautionary measures are placed. This policy also affects genuine visitors as well.

Many residents feel that before the 2000 coups, Fiji's economy was booming. People were very interested in farming. Now every activity is at a standstill. Farmers find it difficult to sell their produce. Many garment factory workers have lost their jobs. Especially in the garment industry, investors have simply locked their doors and have fled the country as a result of the political crisis. An American investor commented in the *Fiji Times* (16 July 1996):

> *Fiji's economy will not improve until people have a reason to live and invest here which means addressing issues of government instability, crime, the constitution, ALTA and accountability.*

These comments are true even today as has been raised by Nilesh Jamnadas who analysis that the 'garment industry forecasts gloom' (*Sun* 9 July 2001:3). Most Indo-Fijians do not see a future for themselves and their children in Fiji as the political problems drag on. Many of them feel threatened by the worsening law and order situation on the streets and in their homes. The fear of violence affects the social life in Wainasasa. There is always someone left behind to look after the house and property whenever families are invited to weddings and parties.

The maintenance of law and order is necessary to create an environment attractive to the investor. The rise in unemployment in urban centres is directly linked to the rapid rise in violent crimes and theft. Incoming governments must develop investor confidence that entails the maintenance of law and order.

However the strategies of development adopted by the government have resulted in the marginalisation of a section of the population. The failure of the government to consider the grievances of other communities has contributed to the present social, economic and political conditions. The government should seriously consider the warning given by the World Bank (1996) that 'it cannot expect a reasonable rate of economic growth unless it adopts a constitution acceptable to all and solve the land-lease problems'. Human resource development will suffer if the authorities do not maintain social order.

Many Indo-Fijians feel that despite them achieving good education their future held little hope in Fiji. They felt that the on-going political problems will not generate economic growth that will affect other services. The future of their children looked bleak. The result from the present survey indicates that the exodus will continue.

SUMMARY

The study shows that emigration is not a new phenomenon for Wainasasa. The initial factor that started emigration from Wainasasa was economic instability. The current trend is now compounded by insecurity created by political crisis.

Families play an important role in matters of emigration. There was a gradual 'pull' once one member of the family went away. The process of 'chain migration' has been an important factor. More people go to Canada and the United States than to Australia and New Zealand. Australian and New Zealand policy is to attract more educated people. This does not mean that people of Wainasasa are not educated. The educated have been joining their families under the 'family re-union' category.

The study has also revealed that some professionals are not interested in emigrating. These respondents did not have many close family members resident overseas. Perhaps they too would consider emigrating if most of their family members go. It has been noticed that the thought of emigration crosses people's mind when a child emigrates. Once the linkage is established, it is maintained. It also appears that only in crisis situation there arises an urgency to

emigrate. Otherwise family members wait for several years (sometimes up to fifteen years) before they finally depart.

The research showed that women have a stronger urge to emigrate than men. They feel more insecure and are concerned about the law and order situation in Fiji. The women also felt that the patriarchal control would be weakened in developed nations. They would have greater freedom through earning a separate income and the laws would protect their status.

While the insecurity of land tenure is virtually absent in Wainasasa, the residents still emigrate when their chance comes. They are frightened that they also can be terrorised as their neighbours in *Muaniweni*, who were residents on freehold land. Ownership of freehold title does not offer the security from terrorism in crisis. This indicates that if emigration is perceived in relation to Fiji, then evidently Indo-Fijians from all other areas have a stronger case to emigrate as most of them reside on 'native land'. Thus emigration is unlikely to be reduced.

CONCLUSION

The significant aspect of this study lies in the fact that there has not been any in-depth study undertaken on Indo-Fijian emigration. Furthermore, there has been no detailed work focusing on issues that directly relate to the question of why Indo-Fijians are emigrating in such large numbers. The work that exists on emigration mostly concentrates on the broader picture and in particular deals with national or regional trends.

Fiji's continuing social, economic and political instability has led to an ethnically-based emigration. More Indo-Fijians emigrate than any other ethnic group. The primary objective of this thesis has been to critically analyse the Indo-Fijian emigration pattern. It has discussed the level, direction and composition of emigration from Fiji highlighting the dramatic increase in emigration in the wake of the two military coups of 1987 and a further increase after the 2000 civil takeover of parliament.

I undertook a historical analysis of Fiji society to determine how and why the actual migration process is initiated. I advanced with the concept that the 'principles of colonialism' have led to the present emigration pattern in Fiji. Unlike other colonies that welcomed indentured labourers, the British did not grant full settler rights to Indians in their colony of Fiji and their rights to land were held in abeyance.

Indenture epitomized the policy of *divide and rule* which has been the hallmark of British Colonization. This led to a number of post-colonial conflicts in Fiji. The crucial problem facing the Indian community is land. Indo-Fijians know that they can never be owners of the land. The salient issue is that leases on native land on which most Indo-Fijians live have begun to expire and many landowners are no longer shown to be interested in leasing their land. The major question that crosses an Indian's mind is where will they go? I argued that the feeling of insecurity and discrimination are the major factors of emigration among the Indo-Fijians.

Chapter two of this thesis has been concerned with some of the theoretical explanations of migration and settlement. The central argument is that migration and settlement are closely related to economic, political and cultural linkages being formed between different countries. The macro and micro-structures of the 'migration systems theory' were discussed. It is important to note that each migratory movement has its specific historical patterns and most migrations start with young economically active persons.

The *indenture system* and the *South Pacific Work Permit Scheme* were analysed as 'macro structures' under the 'migration systems theory'. Emigrations for a large number of Indians and Indo-Fijians were initiated within

these structures. Both these schemes were controlled at government to government level.

The indentured migration led to the permanent settlement of almost 60 per cent of the 'freed' labourers. There is no written record of family members joining the *girmitiya* in Fiji. It is highly unlikely that peasants from India would have joined them. On the other hand, the *girmitiya* did not have the ability to contact their relatives as they struggled with the pressing problems of day-to-day existence in a new life. As time passed, memories of India faded.

In the case of *South Pacific Work Permit Scheme*, only a few labourers managed to become permanent residents in New Zealand. Indications are that a large number were willing to become citizens of New Zealand but could not because of the legal provisions. However, the Indo-Fijian experience of short-term labourer scheme, opened their visions of opportunities available outside Fiji. The exposure to *SPWPS* saw Indo-Fijians going to other developed countries where immigration procedures were not too stringent.

Then I discussed 'micro-structures' in 'migration systems theory'. It refers to emigration of smaller numbers of people related by family and community ties. Family linkages often provide both the financial and the cultural capital which make migration possible. Typically *'migratory chains'* are started by external factors. In the case of Indo-Fijians an initial movement was established with the

movement of young pioneers. Once a movement is established the migrants mainly follow 'beaten paths' (Stahl, 1993) and are helped by relatives and friends already in the area of immigration.

Networks based on family help provide shelter, work and support in personal difficulties. These social networks make the migratory process safer and more manageable for the migrants. Once started, emigration becomes a self-sustaining social process. Thousands of Indo-Fijians have emigrated as *'chain'* migrants since the 1960s. As emigrants become eligible, they sponsor their remaining families under the family support and reunion schemes.

The second argument is that the migratory process has certain internal dynamics based on social networks. These internal dynamics can lead to developments not initially intended by the migrants themselves or by the states concerned. Most migratory movements lead to settlement of a large proportion of emigrants. Thus the emergence of societies which are more ethnically and culturally diverse must be seen as an inevitable result of initial decisions to recruit foreign workers.

Indentured immigration and consequent settlement built a segmented society in Fiji. This led to a potential conflict situation between the two major communities. Indo-Fijians were given the chance to equally participate in the capitalist enterprise as labourers, while the Fijians remained in their villages preserving

their cultures and traditions under the *native policy*. The settlement pattern created an ethnically and culturally diverse society in Fiji.

The ethnic identification in Fiji was designed to maximise the power of the colonial masters in a situation of market competition. Such theories have their roots in Max Weber's concept of *'social closure'*, whereby a status group establishes rules and practices to exclude others, in order to gain a competitive advantage (Weber 1968:343). This is exactly what happened in Fiji's case. The indigenous population remained by-standers as Fiji developed while, the Indo-Fijians were given an equal chance to participate in the capitalist enterprise. The result was that the Indo-Fijians were trained to survive the capitalist economy as individuals but the indigenous Fijians remained tied to their communal environment.

However the Indo-Fijian economic power had to be compromised for political power. Despite their being a majority from 1946 to 1987, they did not enjoy equal political rights. Yet both the communities continued to live side by side without much confrontation. However, in 1987 an Indian dominated government came to power with a 10 per cent swing in Fijian votes. Communal differences became apparent among the indigenous population. These differences were displayed on racial grounds and the government was removed through military coups. Issues of culture, identity and community became highly politicised and 'race' was sensationalised which led to large-scale emigration of Indo-Fijians.

The economic cost of ethnic conflict came back to haunt the coup markers. Fiji was placed back on the track of democracy with the introduction of 1997 constitution, but this again saw an Indian dominated party win the 1999 general election. Again the democratically elected government was thrown out in a civil coup. In a politically unstable environment investors are reluctant to come. Massive economic dislocation has taken place and people are suffering. Indo-Fijian emigration that had stabilised by 1992 has been escalating since 19 May 2000.

The structural costs however, are likely to persist as the ethnic conflict continues to smoulder. In the short run, it is unlikely that economic disparities between Fijians and Indo-Fijians will be bridged, as the Fijian society becomes more and more class conscious. In this context, the basis of another round of discriminatory policies is being laid for ethnic outbidders to capitalize upon, as one tier of extremists is replaced by another in downward spiral of unending destruction of the Fijian economy.

Indo-Fijians are being isolated from many institutions, such as the judiciary, army, police and the civil service. *'State sponsored racism'* in the form of affirmative action programmes, makes an Indo-Fijian worried about their place in Fiji society and it is unlikely that the current level of emigration will be reduced.

Chapter three of this thesis examined in detail the works of various scholars who have written on emigration from Fiji. While most of them agree that the feeling of insecurity is the major factor that causes emigration, the scholars draw from their respective disciplines to explain Indo-Fijian emigration. Connell, Geddes, Bedford & Levick have explained Indo-Fijian emigration as a regional issue. Naidu, Chetty & Prasad see it as a national issue. Studies in host societies have also generally looked at emigration from Fiji as a national issue.

Since, over 90 per cent of emigrants from Fiji are Indo-Fijians, I have analysed it as an 'ethnic issue' and concentrated on Indo-Fijian emigration. Therefore, this thesis is the first empirical study of Indo-Fijian emigration from a rural area. My fieldwork is on a rural locality of mainly unskilled to semi-skilled Indo-Fijians. My main concern is to examine how and why the process was initiated. I have argued that no single cause is ever sufficient to explain why people decide to leave their country and settle in another. It is essential to try to understand all aspects of the migratory process.

Indo-Fijian emigration cannot be viewed along simple economistic lines as suggested by Geddes (1987/88). From my discussion with the respondents it is clear that emigration was triggered mainly by political uncertainties. The importance of socio-political factors cannot be ignored in explaining Indo-Fijian

emigration. The rates of emigration during two periods 1967-1971 and 1987-1990 (see Table 3.4) illustrate very clearly that socio-political environment does have a direct impact on the levels of emigration. The dramatic increase in emigration rates was noted by Chetty and Prasad (1993:10).

They say that:

> *The 1987 level of formal emigration represents a significant increase of 182 per cent over the 1986 level and a 286 per cent increase over the net departure figure for the previous year.*

This research showed that although Indo-Fijian emigration led to an improvement of the material life-chances as suggested by Geddes, for many, it also meant a class and status decline in the process. Material success has not been achieved without difficulties. A number of senior administrators had to change occupations in their adopted countries. Emigration also meant a decline in economic and material welfare for a significant number of people. Yet they do not return. The most pressing reason given was the insecurity of land tenure and discrimination in Fiji. Therefore, I stress that the socio-political factors must be considered in trying to understand Indo-Fijian emigration. If these factors are ignored then the gravity of the problems of this country will be denied and the 'push' to emigrate will not be adequately addressed.

For these reasons most Indo-Fijians are fleeing to countries where they can find a sense of acceptance and belonging. Others at the same time are moving out to seek greener pastures. Many of those are unlucky and only realise their fate when the going gets tough. They have no choice. They are moving to countries where multiculturalism is supposedly promoted and respected. Most find after emigrating that there is freedom of speech, free elections and open and equal treatment before the law. Some find that the ghost of inequality is still with them. There is very little they can do. These rights are balanced by responsibilities, for a democratic society can only function properly when its citizens play an active part in its institutions.

Available evidence suggests that the current high levels of Indo-Fijian emigration will be maintained, which supports the hypotheses I proposed in the first chapter one. There are two reasons for this. First there is a strong demand for particular categories of skilled workforce in countries such as Australia and New Zealand and secondly the presence of a significantly large population of ex Indo-Fijians in the host countries.

Ex Indo-Fijians are committed to living in their new homes. Their commitment is gradually created in the new social environment. It has been observed that they build a way of life as Indo-Fijians in the host countries by accepting a common Indian identity and heritage and transforming it in new environment. These countries have made this identity build-up possible under the policy of

'multiculturalism'. 'Multiculturalism' means accepting the presence of a variety of languages, religions and cultures.

This suggests that the future Indo-Fijian emigration trend will not be affected even if the domestic political stability is maintained. Given the disproportionately large size of ex Indo-Fijians overseas, the 'chain migration' will ensure an almost steady outflow of the Indo-Fijian population.

Further still, the security situation in Fiji remains uncertain following the political crisis and civil disruption that began on May 19, 2001. Fiji, at the turn of the century appears as a country without direction. Both the indigenous and Indo-Fijian communities have been victims of colonialism. Nehru (1946) was not wrong when he said: *'nearly all our problems have grown up during British rule and as a direct result of British policy'* (Discovery of India). The *children of girmitiya* were caught up in this process as their journey continues.

For many Indo-Fijians who emigrate, there will always be a 'soft-spot' in their hearts for Fiji - it is their birthplace. Many still wish to be cremated in Fiji. The words of T.S. Eliot, *'a man's destination is not his destiny, every country is home to one man and exile to another'*, haunt many Indo-Fijians who struggle to find a place in a foreign land, yet they do not return to their birthplace. Some have the aspiration to return one day to their "maatra bhumi" but only God knows how many will be able to achieve that.

FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

This paper was the first research on emigration done at the rural level for the Indo-Fijians. I have tried to explain the actual process of migration. In this research I have shown the importance of migration through family re-union, marriage and to a lesser extent skilled migration. An effort was made to show why Indo-Fijians emigrate. It has become obvious that families play an important role in migration decision-making.

There are not many studies on emigration in Fiji. Jones (1976, Connell (1985, 1987), Bedford and Levick (1988), Chetty and Prasad (1993), and Naidu have all contributed to our understanding. Jones' (1976) work sought to identify the actual geographic source of emigrants, which was very helpful for me in my own study.

More research needs to be done on personal or group characteristics of emigrants. We know little about their age, marital status or family composition.

Like the statistical profile done by Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States also should provide in-depth studies of immigrant communities. There is lack of study of Fiji emigrants in host societies in matters such as employment, education, stability in family and wider integration in host communities. As Chandra and Chetty (1996) suggest detailed interviews with

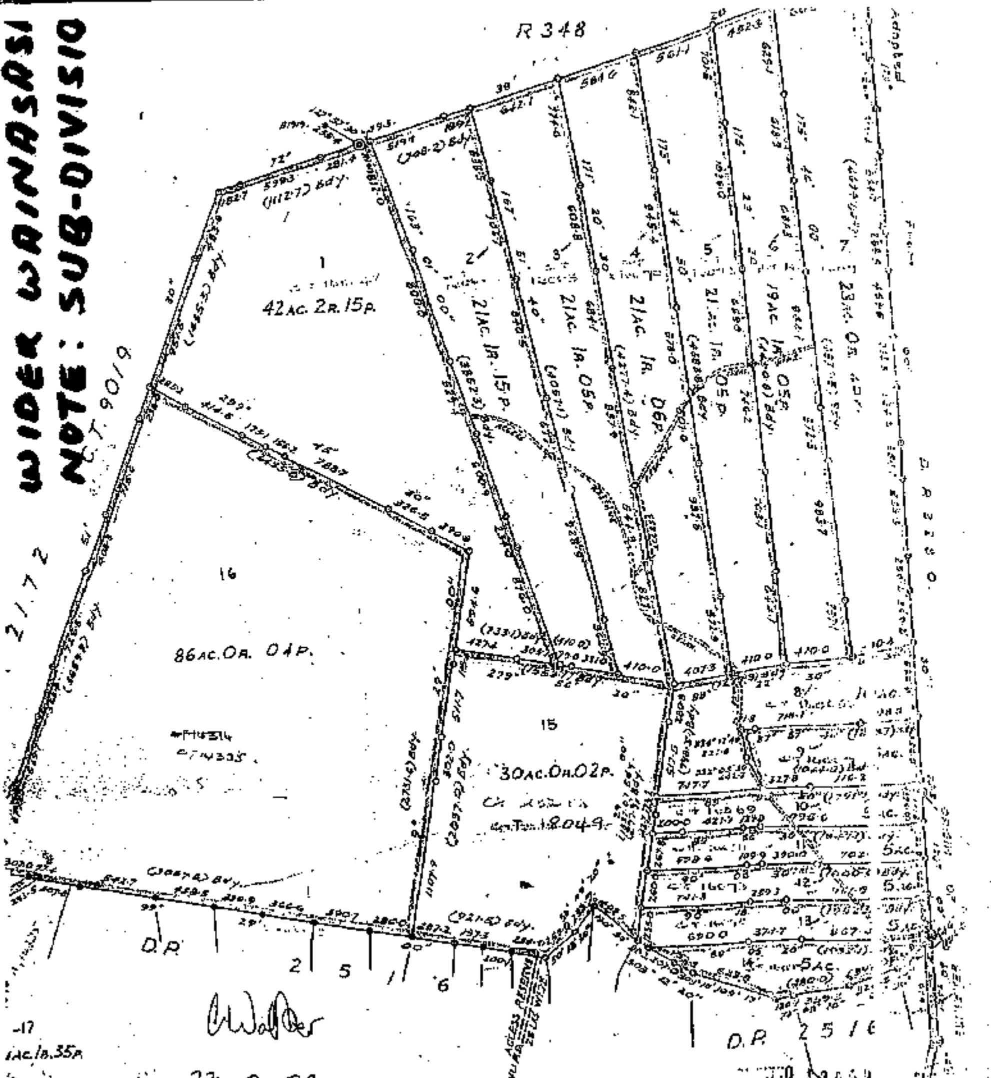
former residents are needed to yield useful information on issues such as the number of visits undertaken to Fiji; visits from Fiji relatives and friends; frequency of telephone and other contacts; the number of family members sponsored by emigrants and involvement in Fiji affairs.

More work is needed on the human dimensions of emigration, especially the human cost of emigration related to the coups of Fiji. I have just touched on the issues and there are many problems that need to be addressed.

Fiji has experienced a magnitude of skill depletion through emigration. Naidu raised her concern for loss of doctors in Fiji. There have been no studies showing the full economic cost of the 'brain drain'. Further research could be undertaken identifying the gains of receiving countries from the emigration of highly skilled people.

Most researchers on migration have neglected women. None of these studies have focused on women. Researchers on migrations have been male and a general level of information on women has been low. It is useful to remark that women also participate in the decision-making processes relating to migration. They frequently have to maintain their families in rural areas once males leave and are affected by mobility in many ways. Women and migration are inseparable and little is known about the subject.

Finally, as Chetty and Prasad suggest, a theoretical technique to measure emigration should be developed. Fiji's emigration pattern is more of an ethnic issue but an increasing number of indigenous Fijians are also emigrating. Who leaves the shores Fiji's is an important question that needs to be addressed. These suggestions imply that an ongoing study of emigration is urgent and essential for public policy planners.



22 - 2 - 70

I hereby certify that this plan has been made from surveys executed by me and that both plan and survey are correct and have been made in accordance with the Surveyors Regulations. Mahendra P Singh

Registered Surveyor.

Date 4-3-70

Date of survey Feb. 1970

Azimuth From DP 2516 S.M.

Registered 13 ... 1970 ... m.

Registrar of Titles.

...being the registered ...ietor hereby accept this plan of ...sion ...

Date 10 May 1970

SURVEY OF ______
NO. ______ KNOWN AS ______
TIKINA OF ______ ISLAND OF ______

RECOMMENDATIONS

Australia's Opposition Leader Kim Beazley while speaking at the Global Foundation in Melbourne (*The Australian*, 4 August 1998), said: '*A sensible flow of immigrants will keep our country young*'. He said:

> *One of our central reasons for promoting a population policy is the serious issue of our aging population and the dependency ratios associated with that.*
> *Today, there is one Australian of retirement age for about every five of working age – that is, 15 to 64. Assuming current levels of net migration continue, in the year 2021, there will be one for about every 3.5. By 2051, there will be one for every 2.5. Certainly we must not be too alarmist about this, (but) we need to think about how we guarantee a sufficient critical mass of employed people to ease what will be a mounting fiscal burden on future generations. Labour knows that immigration can help to keep our country young.*

While there has been a concern for shortage of nurses in Fiji's hospitals for sometime, the Ministry of Health has blamed the Australian Government for the exodus of doctors from our shores (*Sun* 31 July 2001). It is high time that Fiji's governing class realises why Fiji is losing is its trained people. The government should try to create an environment that will retain the skilled and professional Fiji trained people in Fiji.

Fiji does not realise the value of its loss and continues creating an environment which is 'pushing' the Indo-Fijians away. It is high time that the government realises that not only the Indo-Fijians but an increasing number of educated indigenous population is also emigrating.

Fiji has undergone several major crisis related to race but their have been no major racial strife. One needs to examine Indian/Fijian relations because immediately after the 1987 coups a 'kind of fatalism enveloped many Indo-Fijians, they talked not of struggle, but of emigration' (Robertson & Tamanisau 1989:102).

Thousands of people have emigrated from Fiji. An estimated community size in Australia is 53,745 (ADIMA 2001:2) and Canada's *Gazette* (www) estimates that 80,000 ex-Fijians live there. Figures from New Zealand and the United States are not available.

Indications are that as long as Indo-Fijians exist in Fiji the emigrant connection will be maintained. There is already a lucrative market for Fijian products overseas. The government should take careful steps to maintain the links, and revive the economy through exports. This will only be possible if democracy returns.

APPENDIX A

THE DEED OF CESSION OF FIJI TO GREAT BRITAIN

10TH OCTOBER, 1874

NOTE.—One original of the Deed of Cession was retained in Fiji, and until the late 'thirties of the present century was in the archives of the Colonial Government. It began to show signs of wear, however; and photostat facsimiles—from one of which the following text is taken—were made for local use, the original being placed in safe keeping.

The two interlineations, referred to in the Interpreter's certificate, initialled by him in the margin, and indicated below by asterisks, were as follows: (1) in Sir Hercules Robinson's title, the adjective *honorable*, used for the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, was altered to *distinguished*; (2) the article *the* was transposed from a position before *bona fide* to that given in the text. The only other alterations were the correction of certain individual letters, and the deletion of the phrase *and the laws*, which had been duplicated in copying.

Instrument of Cession of the Islands of Fiji by Thakombau, styled Tui Viti and Vuni Valu, and by the other high Chiefs of the said islands to Her Most gracious Majesty Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c &c &c:—

Whereas divers of the subjects of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland have from time to time settled in the Fijian group of islands and have acquired property or certain pecuniary interests therein; **And Whereas** the Fijian Chief Thakombau styled Tui Viti and Vuni Valu and the other high native chiefs of the said islands are desirous of securing the promotion of civilization and Christianity and of increasing trade and industry within the said islands; **And Whereas** it is obviously desirable, in the interests as well of the native as of the white population, that order and good government should be established therein; **And Whereas** the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs have conjointly and severally requested Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland aforesaid to undertake the government of the said islands henceforth; **And Whereas** in order to the establishment of British government within the said islands the said Tui Viti and other the several high chiefs thereof for themselves and their respective tribes have agreed to cede the possession of and the dominion and sovereignty over the whole of the said islands and over the inhabitants thereof and have requested Her said Majesty to accept such cession,—which cession the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs, relying upon the justice and generosity of Her said Majesty, have determined to tender *unconditionally*,—and which cession on the part of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs is witnessed by their execution of these presents and by the formal surrender of the said territory to Her said Majesty; **And Whereas** His Excellency Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, Knight Commander of the most D.W.—distinguished* order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor Commander in Chief and Vice Admiral of the British Colony of New South Wales and its dependencies, and Governor of Norfolk Island, hath been authorised and deputed by Her said Majesty to accept on Her behalf the said Cession:—

Now These Presents Witness,

1. That the possession of and full sovereignty and dominion over the whole of the group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean known as the Fijis (and lying between the parallels of latitude of fifteen degrees South and twenty two degrees South of the Equator and between the Meridians of longitude of one hundred and seventy seven degrees West and one hundred and seventy five degrees East of the meridian of Greenwich) and over the inhabitants thereof, together with the possession of and sovereignty over the waters adjacent thereto and of and over all ports harbours havens roadsteads rivers estuaries and other waters and all reefs and foreshores within or adjacent thereto, are hereby ceded to and accepted on behalf of Her said Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland her heirs and successors, to the intent that from this time forth the said islands and the waters reefs and other places as aforesaid lying within or adjacent thereto may be annexed to and be a possession and dependency of the British Crown.

2. That the form or constitution of government, the means of the maintenance thereof, and the laws* and regulations to be administered within the said islands shall be such as Her Majesty shall prescribe and determine.

3. That, pending the making by Her Majesty as aforesaid or some more permanent provision for the government of the said islands His Excellency Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, in pursuance of the powers in him vested and with the consent and at the request of the said Tui Viti and other high Chiefs the ceding parties hereto, shall establish such temporary or provisional government as to him may seem meet.

4. That the absolute proprietorship of all lands not shown to be now alienated so as to have become bona fide the* property of Europeans or other foreigners or not now in the actual use or occupation of some Chief or tribe or not actually required for the probable future support and maintenance of some chief or tribe shall be and is hereby declared to be vested in Her said Majesty her heirs and successors. D.W.

5. That Her Majesty shall have power, whenever it shall be deemed necessary for public purposes, to take any lands upon payment to the proprietor of a reasonable sum by way of compensation for the deprivation thereof.

6. That all now existing public buildings houses and offices, all enclosures and other pieces or parcels of land now set apart or being used for public purposes, and all stores fittings and other articles now being used in connection with such purposes are hereby assigned transferred and made over to Her said Majesty.

7. That on behalf of Her Majesty His Excellency Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson promises (1) that the rights and interests of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs the ceding parties hereto shall be recognised so far as is and shall be consistent with British Sovereignty and Colonial form

of government, (2.) that all questions of financial liabilities and engagements shall be carefully scrutinized and dealt with upon principles of justice and sound public policy, (3.) that all claims to title to land by whomsoever preferred and all claims to pensions or allowances whether on the part of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs or of persons now holding office under them or any of them shall in due course be fully investigated and equitably adjusted.——

In Witness whereof, the whole of the contents of this instrument of Cession having been, previously to the execution of the same, interpreted and explained to the ceding parties hereto by David Wilkinson Esquire, the interpreter nominated by the said Tui Viti and the other high chiefs and accepted as such interpreter by the said Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, the respective parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals.——

Done at Levuka this tenth day of October, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy four.——

	Cakobau R. Tui Viti and Vunivalu (Seal)
	Maafu (Seal)
Hercules Robinson (Seal)	Tui Cakau (Seal)
	Ratu Epeli (Seal)
	Vakawalitabua Tui Bua (Seal)
	Savenaca (Seal)
	Esekele (Seal)
	B. V. Tui Dreketi (Seal)
	Ritova (Seal)
	Kato-nivere (Seal)
	Ratu Kini (Seal)
	Matanitobua (Seal)
	Nacagilevu (Seal)

I hereby certify that, prior to the execution of the above Instrument of Cession —which execution I do hereby attest—I fully and faithfully interpreted and explained to the ceding parties the whole of the contents of the said document, the interlineations appearing on line 33 of page 1 and on line 30 of page 2 having been first made, and that such contents were fully understood and assented to by the said ceding parties. Prior to the execution of the said instrument of Cession I wrote out an interpretation of the same in the Fijian language, which interpretation I read to the Tui Viti and other high chiefs the ceding parties, who one and all approved thereof. A copy of such interpretation is hereto annexed marked A. Dated this tenth day of October, A.D. 1874.

D. WILKINSON
Chief Interpreter

The interpreter named in the foregoing instrument of Cession

LAND AND FAMILIAL COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD – WAINASASA 1998

Number	Nuclear Family	Extended family	Nuclear, Parents & Unmarried Siblings	Nuclear & Affines	Others	No. of Households	Land Issue
1	6		2	2	1	11	Land partitioned between two brothers following a dispute. Later transmitted by death to widow and 3 sons. Upon widows death estate beneficiaries 5 other sons. One family migrated, looked after by son-in-law
2	3		1	1		5	Second part of above land. Owner died intestate, estate held in equal shares by widow and five sons.
3	4				1	1	Sold to migrant European businessman. Occupied by a Fijian couple. Barren.
4	4	1		1		6	86 acres purchased in 1960s. Paid-off by hardworking father through farming. Estate now occupied by widow and four sons. Lying virtually idle.
5	2	2	1			5	Transferred in life time by owner to four sons. One son a commercial poultry farmer, doing very well.
6	2		1			3	Transferred in life time by owner to 3 sons. Two sons do market gardening. One son dead, land barren and wife working in town.
7			ABANDONED				Owners dead, all children overseas, one daughter in Fiji but living in Suva as a prostitute.
8			ABANDONED			1	Land and house abandoned. Owners dead, all children overseas. Lawyers advertised for sale two years ago.
9			LITTLE FARMING DONE				Owner lives in another lot.
10	4		1	1	2 (empty)	8	Estate land. Two families migrated, houses empty. One

10	6		1	1	8	Undivided land. Two houses are empty, families overseas. One son millionnaire, set up his business on mortgaging the land. Free of mortgage now.
11	1			1	2	Upon death of owner, eldest son paid off most of purchase price and became the owner. He has Desperately wants to sell.
12	1				1	Owner of Lot 9 as well. Taxi driver & farmer.
13	2			1	3	Owner was a money-lender, land sold twice. Present owner resides in Canada. Two sons occupy land and a piece has been given to a priest.*
14	6	1			7	Property transferred in life-time to four sons. One son's share given to 3 grand-children because of difference the owner and his son.
15	2				2	Undivided estate land. Two sons built a shop from farm income. Two other sons live there and still farm a little on this 30 acre land.
16	1	1		1	3	Owner died, widow has transferred the property to two sons. Also owned small lot on the riverside, sold due to debt.
17	2					Bought by two brother who lived across the river in only one brother's name. Upon death of the brother the legal owner sold to an only *Fijian* family. The widow of the brother did not receive anything, now she lives with her fmaily.
18	1				1	Owner dead, son now owns. His wife and children live overseas. A bulldozer and truck owner and a farmer.

19	1		1	Owner migrated, now acquired by son-in-law. His daughter overseas with grandparents.
20	2		2	Owner dead. There are two lot, each owned by two sons. One son overseas for 15 years, looked after by other brother. Well-off farmer, owns properties in Suva. Three graduates children of occupier overseas, only one resides separates from father, his sons also away.

APPENDIX C

ver
the online magazine for Fiji people living overseas

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The Vanishing - Archive

Accounts of emigrants' experiences including what it was like leaving Fiji, how they adjusted to a new life in a new country, and the place Fiji occupies in their hearts now.

The Vanishing is a unique forum that gives voice to the individual and collective anguish and exhilaration of the emigrant experience.

*(subject to response and availability)

HOW NEEL PATHAK BECAME NPA SYSTEMS

Name: Neel Pathak, 41
Occupation: Managing Director (NZ/Asia) and CEO (USA) – Network Products and Application Systems
Home: Wellington, New Zealand
Quote: *"I guess if there is any place I can really call home it's Fiji – that's where I grew up."*

Growing up in Suva

I grew up in Suva and attended a total of 15 different schools, including stints in New Zealand and England. In Suva I went to Nehru Memorial and MGM as my parents insisted that I attend Indian schools so that I could learn Hindi. Hindustani values were drilled into me from early childhood.

As a child I was unmanageable according to my parents. (I think I was just hyper). When I was about 13 my mum asked one of her cousins, Mohan Musadilal, of Musadilal & Sons, to hire me in their shop so that I could be out of mischief. Thus began an apprenticeship that probably has shaped me into what I am today. From age 13, I worked every weekend and every school holiday in their shop until I left for university. Although I missed out on a lot of fun that my friends had, with the benefit of hindsight, I think this was one of the best things to happen to me.

Around fifth form, a trend was beginning: most people finished their high school in New Zealand and went on to university there or in Australia. I wanted to do the same but my father argued that there was nothing wrong with finishing high school in Fiji like so many others before me had.

Not wanting to be a doctor, my mother's choice, nor an

accountant, my father's, I majored in electrical/electronics engineering at Derrick Technical Institute, now FIT. In 1975, I was the last of the batch to do the British exams for the City and Guilds of London Institute diploma programme. I knew that this course would either land me a job or get me straight into second year engineering at any college in the English speaking world.

Go west, young man

By this time I did not want to go to New Zealand or Australia like most of my friends. I had set my sights on the United States of America. I felt that the US was where things were happening and that US qualifications would open up the world to me from a job perspective.

My father refused to finance me at first saying, quite rightly, that it would cost too much. But I pledged that I would treat any endowment from him as a loan and would pay it back, no matter how long it took. So America it was. I also made up my mind that I would never return to Fiji. If I had to pay back my father, I had to work somewhere else.

I only got two pieces of advice from my parents. Dad's advice was: "I don't want to see your face without a piece of paper to your name and if I hear you're doing drugs, I'll break every bone in your body." Mum's advice: "Kisi mem ko bahu banaye ke nahi lana."

Armed with these commands and requests and little else, off I went to college in Los Angeles in the summer of 1976. During the first semester, I realised my aeronautical engineering programme was a mistake – being a foreign student, it wasn't going to get me a job in the US. My thoughts at the time were that I needed a ticket that would allow me to stay in the country and get a job.

I switched courses and enrolled in a computer technology /electronics major. By now I was really focussed - I wanted to work and live in the US and the only way to a green card would be a decent grade point average and a good job offer.

Living in LA was hard. My father had financed the first 12 months of my study. The rest was up to me. At US$12,000 annually, this was going to be hard slog. I lived in a hostel the first six months and it was terrible. American hostel food is worse than dog food! A couple of Pakistanis, an Indian and I decided to flat together so we moved out and shared an apartment. This saved us heaps compared to the hostel costs. And now we could also eat what we wanted, when we wanted, and we could invite people to our apartment.

My course schedule gave me Fridays free so I found a job

working 45 hours from Friday to Sunday. It was a cashier's position at one of the Pussycat theatres in Hollywood - a porn

and I didn't care that I was working at a porn movie theatre. (I had an uncle visit me once and when he found out where I worked, I thought he would tell mum and dad but instead he said, "Sonny, do you have any complimentary tickets?").

I was very lonely as a student. Each time I telephoned home I wanted to speak for hours. Gradually I became self reliant and really started loving LA. I graduated with good grades and in 1978 landed myself a job with Benchmark Systems, a systems integration company based in Los Angeles with operations throughout the world. The company had a rule that if I wanted to progress into management roles, then I had to enrol in an MBA program, which I did. Eventually, as International Support Manager, I did stints in the Middle East and in Latin America.

Life was just great - the green card was on its way and an MBA would take me further. I thought life couldn't be better - I even had time to socialise and catch up with things I had missed before!

Tragedy strikes

Because the MBA was a means to greater responsibilities in the company, I wanted to come out tops. So I pursued this with great determination. But then, in October 1980, as I was doing my final MBA paper, my life and dreams were shattered: my younger brother, Rashmi, who was seventeen at the time, died tragically in Suva. Mum and dad were just broken.

When I returned to Fiji in 1981, I had reluctantly given up my dream of living in the US. Now I was going to be with my family in Suva. Mum was so distraught; Dad had withdrawn into a world of his own; and, my younger sister didn't communicate much. The family was going through a huge depression.

I started looking for a job, an experience in itself. Because I had listed MBA in my resume, I was over qualified. People couldn't afford me after my American salary and people couldn't relate to a software engineer with an MBA. It was very frustrating. Finally I said: "Bugger this, I'm going to set up shop myself or I'm going back to the US." Then IDL offered me a job because of my experience with micro-computers.

In 1982 I got married, went back to the US for a honeymoon and finished off my MBA, then returned to Fiji. I stayed in Fiji between 1981 and 1987, eventually becoming the sales and marketing director at IDL. During this time, IDL ended up in receivership and in late 1986 Vijay Madhvan, a colleague, and

I did what was Fiji's first leveraged management buy-out. We began to turn the company around.

And then of course ...

When the Labour party won the elections in 1987, I knew that a military coup was imminent. Of course, no one took me

have an exit visa to somewhere. I knew my wife would prefer New Zealand to the US since she studied there, so in April 1987 I submitted applications to the New Zealand High Commission and the Australian High Commission (whom I still haven't heard from). The New Zealand High Commission responded quickly. They said I could emigrate either as a professional with skills in demand or as a business migrant. On 13 May 1987 I went to New Zealand to attend interviews; on the 14th I was in between interviews when a cabbie told me what was happening in Suva. That night I was glued to the TV in my hotel room. The scenes of violence that followed was gut wrenching. I returned to Fiji that week with several job offers and within a week I had a New Zealand residency visa.

The thought of being a second class citizen in Fiji did not appeal to me. If anything, the coup of May 1987 helped clarify things in my mind and made me weigh a lot of factors. What was my future? What was the future of my children? I eventually decided I'd go to New Zealand because I could resume life easily and it wasn't too far from Fiji. At least we could visit our parents or they could visit us.

Starting over

When we arrived in New Zealand in mid-winter, it was a real shock. Socially we knew very few people and after living in Fiji in a comfort zone that I had become used to, the starting over was quite painful. We would get asked: "Did you come before or after the coup? So how come you can afford a house so quickly after fleeing Fiji? You must have moved money out of Fiji, eh?" That was the kind of socialising one went through at first.

I guess I have left Fiji twice, the first time to study in the USA and not return; the second time when I emigrated to New Zealand. The first time I had a feeling of joy and anticipation when I left. The second time I had mixed emotions, which I cannot describe, involving the loss of friends and family on the one hand, versus a "fresh" start, on the other. The grass always looks greener from the other side but it isn't when you get there. Adjusting to a new life is not easy; each time you move you start all over.

When you live overseas you're always from "somewhere". I am either from Fiji or I am a Fiji Indian. I guess if there is any place I can really call home it's Fiji – that's where I grew up.

Success

The settling down and "feel good" factor is the hardest for most people, myself included.

I worked at Ernst & Young as a consultant, first in Auckland and then in Hamilton. Later I changed jobs and ended up in Wellington where I have been living for the last 10 years. During the late 1980s, as a senior manager of consulting

government departments operate like commercial businesses, and managed some of New Zealand's high profile computerisation projects.

In 1991 I joined an Australian software company as their New Zealand general manager because by now I was itching to get back into the software business in a line management capacity. I was hired to turn around their New Zealand business operations which were making losses and was later promoted to manage their New South Wales operations also. For a while I commuted between Wellington and Sydney and the stress level was quite high.

The company had a fall out among their directors and in the carve up I bought their New Zealand operations. A management buy-out again! I renamed the company NPA Systems and changed strategy to focus on customer relationship management and e-commerce. NPA provides call centre services and software, and develops internet applications software.

I realised that since New Zealand is very small, to be successful I would have to market my products globally. So although I live here, I work throughout the Pacific rim area. My company operates in New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and the USA, and currently has an annual turnover of US$46 million. I intend to gradually move headquarters to Silicon Valley and hopefully go public and do an initial float on the sharemarket.

An economic pussy

Can Fiji be an economic cheetah, if not a tiger? I think so. I am pretty confident that given half a chance, people of my generation and those after us can transform Fiji into a model that mimics the success of Singapore or Hong Kong.

Political stability would be a good starting point. The expatriate Fiji community are a reasonable economic force in their own right. This community can provide far more investment in Fiji than foreigners ever would, provided there was an incentive to attract these people back. They need to be made welcome with easy flow of funds in and out of the country.

I think the key to Fiji's future is to develop a knowledge economy or intellectual property based economy of some kind. Can we develop technology? Hell yes! The key to success anywhere in the world is to "have skills that are in demand". When physical resources are limited and the economy is small, the only way to ensure employability and success is to pursue skills-based opportunities.

You can only do some of that in Fiji. Then you need to acquire overseas experience. Fiji ought to encourage young people to go overseas for a while. While the idea may shock some employers in Fiji, in New Zealand and various other countries this philosophy is taken for granted. Sure Fiji would lose some

overseas-returned-locals, then it would work both ways and the net loss would be diminished.

Return to Eden?

I get the urge to return to Fiji from time to time. But I think I will wait until both my children finish university. Then, perhaps, I can think of retirement. I do, however, get asked about investing in Fiji. While I have plans for setting up a call centre there, they are on hold.

Now that I live offshore, I view Fiji with a level of objectivity that I may not have had had I lived there. I think the same issue applies to all races there - economic wellbeing.

Disclaimer:
The content and views expressed, and events related to, are based on my personal experiences. I do not take liability or responsibility for offending anyone with my views - Neel Pathak.

The views expressed in this column are that of the individual author. Over here magazine does not take liability or responsibility for them - The Editor.

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The Vanishing - Archive

Accounts of emigrants' experiences including what it was like leaving Fiji, how they adjusted to a new life in a new country, and the place Fiji occupies in their hearts now.

The Vanishing is a unique forum that gives voice to the individual and collective anguish and exhilaration of the emigrant experience.

*(subject to response and availability)

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