

India – Fiji Relations

Historical Perspective

India's links with Fiji commenced in 1879 when Indian laborers were brought here under indenture system to work on sugarcane plantations. Between 1879 and 1916 around 60,000 Indians were brought to Fiji. Beginning with early 20th century, Indian traders and others also started arriving in Fiji. Agitation by the workers and the reports of C.F. Andrews, who visited Fiji in 1915 and 1917, led to the abolition of the indenture system in 1920. Currently, of the 849,000 population (2009 estimates), 37% are people of Indian origin.

Prior to Fiji's independence in 1970, India had a Commissioner since 1948 to look after the interests of people of Indian origin. The Commissioner's post was upgraded to that of High Commissioner after independence. Fiji's Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara visited India in 1971 and Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi visited Fiji in 1981.

Following the 1987 coups in Fiji, the High Commission of India and Indian Cultural Centre were closed on May 24, 1990. The High Commission of India was subsequently reopened in March 1999 and the Indian Cultural Centre in February 2005. Fiji established its High Commission in New Delhi in January 2004. India-Fiji bilateral relations have grown steadily during the past few years due to several ongoing initiatives and bilateral visits to and from Fiji.

Public Sector Undertakings: Three Government of India undertakings, viz, New India Assurance Company Ltd. (since 1954), Life Insurance Corporation of India (since 1956), Bank of Baroda (since 1961) have been functioning successfully in Fiji.

Recent Visits to India

2012: PM Commodore J.V. Bainimarama, Vice Chairman of International Sugar Council, led Fiji's delegation for the International Sugar Organisation / International Sugar Council's meeting in April; PM Bainimarama again in September; Minister for Health, Dr. Neil Sharma in May; Hon. Dr. Jiko Luveni, Minister for Social Welfare, Women & Poverty Alleviation in June 2012 & again in September; Minister for Primary Industries, Hon. Joketani Cokanasiga, in July; and President of Fiji, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau in August.

2013: Minister for Urban Development, Local Government, Housing and Environment, Col. Samuela Saumatua in March, and Health Minister, Dr. Neil Sharma, in May.

2014: Attorney General and Minister for Tourism, Industry and Trade, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, in January for CII Partnership Summit and signed DTAA; Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation (FM) Ratu Inoke

Kubuabola in February. During the visit three agreements were signed: i. Extension of the validity of MOU on Development Cooperation; ii. MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Water Resources Management, and iii. MoU on Standardisation and Conformity Assessment between Bureau of Indian Standards

Recent Visits from India

2011: **Smt Preneet Kaur, MOS (EA)** in September, and Shri Dilip Sinha, AS (IO & ED) and Shri A.K. Goel, JS (South), accompanied by HOMs in Fiji, Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in July.

2013: Joint Secretary (South), Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya, in April; delegation led by Shri Sudhir Kumar, Secretary (F&PD), Department of Food and Public Distribution in June; Ms. Neeta Bhushan, Joint Secretary, DPA-II Division in June; and a team of 36 scientists and support group and two ships SCI Yamuna and SCI Nalanda October in connection with Mars Orbiter Mission.

Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) / Pravasi Bhartiya Samman (PBS): PBS awardees from Fiji are: Mr. Mahendra Chaudhry, former PM (2004); Golfer Mr. Vijay Singh (2005); Late Sir Moti Tika Ram, former Supreme Court Judge (2007), and Mr. Y.P. Reddy, Reddy Group Chairman and Chairman, Girit Council (2010). Many prominent members of the Indian diaspora from Fiji have been regularly attending PBD in India. In January 2014, Ramakrishna Mission, Fiji was conferred Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award.

Grant-in-Aid: In fulfillment of announcements made by Government of India for grant-in-aid to each of the PIF countries, Government of India provided funds to Fiji for 5 Toyota Cars for Fiji Police; 500 sewing Machines; 5 Ambulances for hospitals; 134 Water Tanks for primary and higher secondary schools, and mobile Library Vehicle for Suva City Carnegie Mobile Library; 4x4 Double Cab for Rarawai & Penang Cane Producers' Association; Upgradation of a road in Kieuva near Suva, and Equipment and books for TISI Sangam college of Nursing and Health Care Education in Labasa.

Project Assistance: GOI provided assistance to Fiji National University in April 2012 for purchase of five sets of motorized sugarcane crushing units with associated accessories, and to Kidney Foundation of Fiji in April 2012 for purchase of dialysis machines and equipment for its new Dialysis Centre. Grant was also provided in January 2014 for purchase of medicines from India at a total cost of Rs.10 lakh.

Relief Assistance: A total of US\$100,000/- in February 2009 after Cyclone Tomas in March 2010; US\$ 200,000 in July 2012 following floods in January and March 2012, and US\$ 100,000 in 2013 after the cyclone Evan were provided by GOI to Fiji. Government of Fiji had given F\$ 30,000 to India in October 2005 following an earthquake in Kashmir.

Line of Credit: India extended US\$ 50.4 million Line of Credit in July 2005 for up-gradation of sugar mills in Fiji.

ITEC: India has offered 55 slots under the ITEC and 30 slots under the TCS Colombo Plan to Fiji for short-term training courses in various Indian institutions for 2014-15. In addition 40 slots for Navy and 10 slots for Army have been offered to Fiji defence personnel for short/long-term training programmes during the year 2014-15.

Scholarships and cooperation in the education sector

ICCR Chair: Prof. S. Ghosh joined as ICCR's Dada Saheb Phalke Chair of Film Production at the Fiji National University in December 2012.

MoU with Universities: University of Fiji signed an MoU with University of Calcutta in September 2012 for Cooperation between the two universities. USP, FNU and the University of Fiji have MoUs with different Universities / institutions in India.

GCC of ICCR: Under the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme of ICCR, 30 scholarships have been offered during the year 2014-15, out of which 24 slots have been utilized.

Other Scholarships: Non-country specific scholarships are also offered for Diaspora Children by MOIAF, Certificate/Diploma Course in Hindi conducted by Kendriya Hindi Sansthans, New Delhi and Agra, and AYUSH scholarship scheme in traditional medicine. One student from Fiji availed of the AYUSH scholarship for the first time in 2012.

Healthcare – Public-private participation

An Agreement between the Sahyadri Group Hospitals, Pune and Ministry of Health, Government of Fiji was signed in July 2012 to provide tertiary health care facilities in Fiji. Apollo Hospitals in April 2013 signed an MoU with the Fiji National University, for cooperation in training and capacity building and organizing a telemedicine / mobile health programme. Subsequently, in August 2013, Apollo's telemedicine center at Fiji National University (FNU)'s campus was opened. Apollo also held 'Fiji Health for All' Medical Symposium in July 2014 in Suva in collaboration with FNU.

Jaipur Foot: Health specialists from Fiji underwent prosthetic training at the Jaipur Foot organization (Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), July-September 2010). A 6-member specialist team from BMVSS visited Fiji in June 2011 at the invitation of the Ministry of Health of Fiji to carry out limb fitments and help establish an artificial limbs unit at the CWM Hospital, Suva.

Commercial and Economic Relations

Bilateral Trade: (according to Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics)

Year	Export		Import		Total Trade	
	Fijian \$	US\$	Fijian \$	US\$	Fijian \$	US\$
2011	7.4	4.1	64.3	35.3	-56.9	-31.3
2012	10.3	5.8	70.3	39.3	-60.0	-33.6
2013 ^P	3.5	1.9	89.6	49.0	-86.2	-47.1

Major items of import from India are textiles, precious / semiprecious stones, chemicals, plastics & rubber, machinery and food products. Major items of export to India are pearls and iron & steel (scrap).

An MoU on Supervisory Cooperation and Exchange of Supervisory Information between the Reserve Bank of India and the Reserve Bank of Fiji was signed in March 2013.

Tourism: A tourism seminar in collaboration with India Tourism Office, Sydney was organized by the High Commission in Suva from in August, 2012. India Tourism Office, Sydney also participated in the Hibiscus festival of 2012 and 2013. The festival is held in August every year in Suva.

Consular: The number of Indians living in Fiji is about 1000, mostly engaged in services like IT industry, management, finance, banking, educational institutions, medical services, hotel industry etc. Persons of Indian origin in Fiji as per the last census of 2007 were 313,798.

Cultural Relations: An Indian Cultural Centre in Fiji was established by GOI in 1972. A sub-Centre of the ICC at Lautoka was inaugurated by the Honourable Speaker of Parliament Shri Som Nath Chatterjee in 2005. ICC Suva and Sub-Centre Lautoka provide classes in Indian classical music and dance and Hindi language. ICC organizes cultural evenings, exhibitions, film shows, workshops and discussions regularly.

Film Festivals: Fiji National University and Film Fiji (formerly Fiji Audio Visual Commission), in association with the High Commission of India and others organized International Film Festivals in 2012; and 2013.

In 2013, a total of 162 films from 28 countries were screened across Fiji. Entries from India won 11 awards in different categories, with the best actor award to H.G. Dattatreya for his role in 'Bharath Stores', and best director award to Jahnu Barua for 'Bandhan'. 'The Saroj Khan Story' won the best documentary featurette film.

Useful Resources:

For more information and latest updates please visit:
High Commission of India, Suva website:

<https://www.indianhighcommissionfiji.org>

High Commission of India, Suva Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HicomindSuva>

Indian Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Suva Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ICCHighcomindSuva>

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