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. In 1920, the indenture system was abolished. 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. It was upgraded to 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 political developments in Fiji, the High Commission of India and Indian Cultural Centre were closed in May 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.

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), are functioning in Fiji.

Recent Visits to India

2015: Attorney General and Minister for Tourism, Industry and Trade Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and Minister for Industry & Trade Fayaz Koya in January for CII Partnership Summit in Jaipur; Minister for Agriculture Inia Seruiratu in January-February for 51st Ministerial meeting of the Asia Pacific Coconut Community in Kochi; Minister for Health and Medical Services Jone Usmate in March; Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama in August for 2nd Summit of Forum for India-Pacific Islands Co-operation (FIPIC) at Jaipur; 20 Fijians of Indian descent in September for World Hindi Conference at Bhopal, and Acting Minister of Health and Medical Services Veena Bhatnagar in October for Advantage Health Care Summit at New Delhi.

Recent Visits from India

2015: New India Assurance Head G. Srinivasan in April for business expansion; Captain Chetan Chandegave, India's Defence Advisor based in Canberra, Australia in April on an introductory visit; Bollywood singer Himesh Reshammiya in May for performance; Indian delegation led by Shri Dharitri Panda, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in July for Second Joint Working Group; Shri Chaudhary Birender Singh, Minister for Rural Development in August for 30th Meeting of CIRDAP Executive Committee (EC-30) and 20th Meeting of CIRDAP Governing Council (GC-20) & 7th CIRDAP) Regional Policy Dialogue (RPD-7), and Bollywood actor Johnny Lever in October for opening of Relax Resort in Nadi.

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Fiji on 19 November 2014. During the visit three MoUs were signed with Fiji: (i) MoU for Extending a Line of Credit for Establishing a Co-Generation Plant in Fiji, (ii) MoU on Cooperation in the field of training of diplomats, and (iii) MoU on the Earmarking of Land for their Diplomatic Missions in the respective Capitals. The India-Pacific Island Countries Forum Summit was held in Fiji during the visit with the participation of 14 Pacific countries.

Indian Assistance

Hon'ble PM's announcements on 19 November 2014 with respect to Fiji were as follows: (i) India to support construction of Fijian Parliament Library, (ii) Visa on arrival for Fiji nationals, (iii) Provision of US$ 5 million fund for promoting small business and village enterprise in Fiji, (iv) Extension of LoC for US$ 70 mn for a co-generation project, (v) Increase ITEC (Civil & Defence) and scholarship slots to Fiji to 125, (vi) Enhancing cooperation in the development of rice, coconut and dairy industry in Fiji, (vii) India to extend support to promote IT and 'Digital Fiji', (viii) Enhancing collaboration in the area of space technology, including for its application in governance, economic development, conservation, climate change and natural disasters, and (ix) Encouragement to Indian film industry to shoot in Fiji.

The announcements made by Hon'ble PM on 19 November 2014 with respect to Pacific countries (including Fiji) were the following: (i) Setting up of a Special Adaptation Fund of $ 1 million, (ii) Development of Pan Pacific Islands Project for telemedicine and tele-education, (iii) Indian Visa on arrival for Pacific Island Countries – "Cook Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, Republic of Nauru, Republic of Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Niue, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea", (iv) Increase in Grant-in-Aid to Pacific Island Countries to $ 200,000 annually to be rolled over to provide for a wider scope for our development cooperation, (v) Establishment of Trade Office for Pacific Island Forum countries in India, (vi) Providing complimentary space to Pacific Island Forum countries during exhibitions, organized by ITPO, (vii) Deputation of ITEC experts to Pacific Island countries, including in the areas of agriculture, healthcare and IT, (viii) Organizing Training to Diplomats from Pacific Island Countries, (ix) Starting a Distinguished Visitors Programme for Pacific Island Countries, (x) Holding of the next Summit Meeting of India and Pacific Island Leaders in India in 2015, (xi) Cooperation in the use of Space technology applications for improving the quality of life of people and communications, (xii) Explore possibilities of sharing data for monitoring climate change, disaster risk reduction and management and resource management, and (xiii) Undertake joint research in traditional medicine; developing healthcare facilities for the benefit of people in the region.

In fulfilment of announcements made by Government of India for grant-in-aid to each of the PIF countries, Government of India provided funds for 5 cars for Fiji Police; 500 sewing Machines; 5 Ambulances for hospitals; 134 Water Tanks for primary and higher secondary schools; 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; Equipment & books for TISI Sangam college of Nursing & Health Care Education in Labasa; 5000 Akash UbiSlate tablets for schools, and 300 sewing machines.

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.

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 J&K.

India had extended US$ 50.4 million Line of Credit in July 2005 for up-gradation of sugar mills in Fiji. Another Lines of Credit (LOCs) of USD 5.38 million for Up-gradation of sugar industry in Fiji and USD 70 million for Cogeneration of Power Plant at Rarawai Sugar Mill were extended in February 2015.

Following PM's announcement during his visit to Fiji, annual ITEC slots had been increased from 55 to 110, which were further increased to 170 for 2015-16.

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, Girmit Council (2010).

Education sector

ICCR Chair: Prof Balakrishnan Diwaker joined as ICCR's Chair at Fiji National University (FNU) in November 2015.

GSS of ICCR: Under the General Scholarship Scheme of ICCR, 29 scholarships were offered to Fiji for 2015-16. Fiji utilized 13 scholarships.

Other Scholarships: Non-country specific scholarships are also offered for Diaspora Children by MOIA, 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 AYUSH scholarship for the first time in 2012.

Healthcare

Sahyadri: An Agreement between the Sahyadri Group of 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. In August 2013, Apollo's telemedicine center at Fiji National University (FNU)'s campus was opened.

Jaipur Foot: Health specialists from Fiji underwent prosthetic training at the Jaipur Foot organization (Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), in July-September 2010**)**. A 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	71.7	39.4
2012	10.3	5.8	70.3	39.3	80.6	45.1
2013	3.5	1.9	89.6	49.0	93.1	50.9
2014	4.0	2.0	97.5	48.7	101.5	50.7

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).

Banking: 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: India Tourism Office, Sydney participated in the Hibiscus festival of 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. The festival is held in August every year in Suva.

Consular: The number of Indians living in Fiji is about 1400, mostly engaged in services like IT, management, finance, banking, educational, medical, hotel industry etc.

Cultural Relations: An Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) in Fiji was established by GOI in 1972. ICC provides 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, in association with the High Commission of India and others organized International Film Festivals in 2012; 2013, 2014 and 2015. The entries from India won 11 awards in different categories in 2015.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Suva website:
http://www.indianhighcommissionfiji.org
High Commission of India, Suva Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/IndiainFiji
Indian Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Suva Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/ICCHighcomindSuva

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