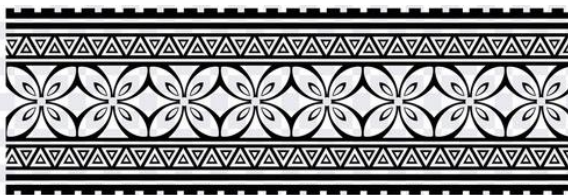


Year 10 History

The History of Fiji

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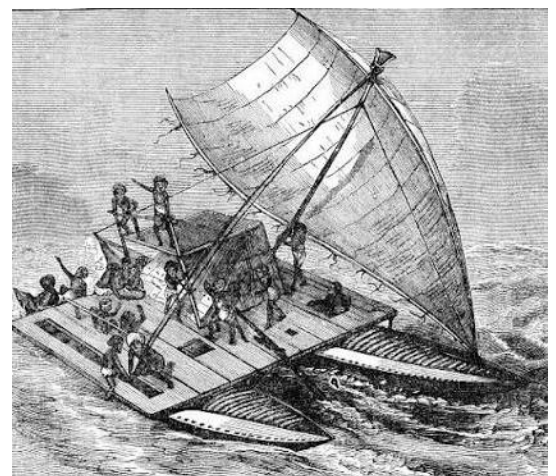
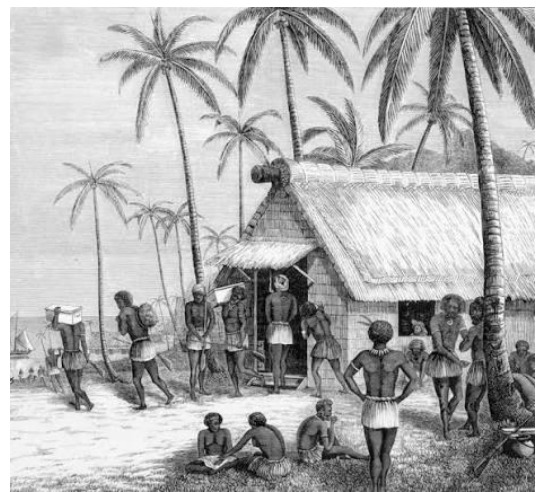
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<https://nelishasingh.wordpress.com/2025/03/20/from-india-to-fiji-a-story-of-struggle-survival-and-identity/>



Fiji's Government and Democracy

TYPES OF GOVERNMENT IN FIJI

There are different types of government existing in the world today. They have different ways of being selected into power and also different ways of ruling their countries. Many of these types of government no longer exist today because of the influence of factors such as: change, education, multiculturalism and establishment of many organizations. In Fiji, we have experienced different types of government of both tradition and western type where election decides the government of the day.

1. TRADITIONAL GOVERNMENT

The traditional governments in Fiji consist of the leadership of the elite class which is the chiefs. In this system the chief controls everything. Each chief's role their own domain which are usually small units until later on when some chief grew very powerful and control other areas outside of their domain.

This form of leadership ceased in 1874 when Fiji was ceded to Great Britain but it was still used by the British in their crown colony government to rule the i-Taukei.

Even though we have adopted western leadership style, our traditional setting still practices traditional government. For example, the role of the Tikina and Yasana where chiefs are part of decision makers even though we have Provincial Administrators who sees the development that takes place within the Yasana.

2. WESTERN STYLE OF GOVERNMENT

Western style of government is practiced almost in all countries around the world. However, there are different types of government in practice and most is determined by the type of leadership existing within the country.

a. DEMOCRACY

In democracy, the government is elected by the people. Everyone who is eligible to vote has a chance to have their say over who runs the country. It is distinct from governments controlled by a particular social class or group (aristocracy; oligarchy) or by a single person (despotism; dictatorship; monarchy).

How Democratic government operates is determined either directly or through elected representatives.

b. COLONIALISM

Colonialism is the establishment, exploitation, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colony in one territory by a political power from another territory. It is a set of unequal relationships between the colonial power and the colony and often between the colonists

and the indigenous population. Historians distinguish between two overlapping forms of colonialism:

- i. Settler Colonialism involves large-scale immigration, often motivated by religious, political or economic reasons.
- ii. Exploitation Colonialism involves fewer colonists and focuses on access to resources for export, typically to the metropole. This category includes trading posts as well as larger colonies where colonists would constitute much of the political and economic administration, but would rely on indigenous resources for labour and material.

c. AUTOCRACY

Autocracy is a type of government that is run by a single person having unlimited power; despotism (domination through threat of punishment and violence).

d. OLIGARCHY

Oligarchy type of government is where power is in the hands of a few such as a dominant clan or clique. These were mostly people of royalty, wealth, education or military control and later passed their influence from one generation to the next.

A modern example would be that of South Africa during much of the 20th century where the form of oligarchy was mostly based on the few clearly defined by race. The white made up 20% of the population but this small percentage ruled the vast non-white and mixed-race population. As a result, the white has access to virtually all educational opportunities and deny this to the black majority.

e. MONARCHY

A monarchy has a king, queen, emperor or empress. The ruling position can be passed on to the ruler's heirs. In some traditional monarchies, the monarch has absolute power. But a constitutional monarchy, like the UK, also has a democratic government that limits the monarch's control. For example, the Queen of England.

f. DICTATORSHIP

A country ruled by a single leader or a small group of people. The position is gained through force and people have very little voice to express their opinion. The leader has not been elected and may use force to keep control. Some of the well-known dictators were Adolf Hitler of Germany, Idi Amin of Uganda, Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Kim Jong Il of North Korea. In a military dictatorship, the army is in control.

g. CAPITALIST

In a capitalist or free-market country, people can own their own businesses and property. People can also buy services for private use, such as healthcare. But most capitalist governments also provide their own education health and welfare services.

h. COMMUNIST

In a communist country, the government owns property such as businesses and farms. Leaders seek to create a classless society where there is no lower, middle or upper class and all goods are shared equally amongst everyone. Communist government provides its people's healthcare, education and welfare. Currently communism can be seen in Russia and China.

i. REPUBLIC

A republic is a country that has no monarch. The head of the country is usually an elected president. Fiji is known as a Republic and has its President.

j. REVOLUTIONARY

If a government is overthrown by force, the new ruling group is sometimes called a revolutionary government.

k. TOTALITARIAN

This is a country with only one political party. People are forced to do what the government tells them and may also be prevented from leaving the country.

Activities

1. Describe Fiji's traditional form of government.
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this system?
3. Under what form of government is Fiji governed today?
4. What are the advantages of a democracy? What dangers does it overcome?
5. What are the disadvantages of Colonialism?
6. How is an Oligarchy unfair?
7. Which countries have monarchies today?
8. Do you think a Monarchy is a good idea? Why or why not?
9. Who was the evil dictator in World War II? What did he do?
10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Capitalism?
11. Name a country that is ruled by a Communist government today. What disadvantages do you see?
12. What similarities are there between Communism and Totalitarianism?

Parliamentary History of Fiji

Fiji's Parliament started when it became independent. It replaced the former colonial Legislative Council which existed during the colonial period.

Politics of Fiji take place within the framework of a parliamentary representative **democratic republic**. Fiji has a multiparty system with the prime minister of Fiji as head of government. The executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the Parliament of Fiji. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature.

Fiji's head of State is the **president**. He is elected by Parliament of Fiji, after nomination by the **prime minister** or **leader of opposition**, for a three-year term. Although his role is largely an honorary one, modelled after that of the British monarchy, the president has certain "reserve powers" that may be used in the event of a national crisis.

Actual executive power is in the hands of the **cabinet**, presided over by the prime minister. The prime minister is formally appointed by the president, but must be acceptable to a majority of the House of Representatives. In practice, this usually reduces the president's role to little more than a formality, with the position automatically going to the leader of the political party or coalition that controls a majority of seats.

Legislative Branch

Fiji's Parliament consisted of two houses (bicameral). The more powerful of the two chambers, the **House of Representatives**, has 71 members, elected for five-year terms.

The Upper chamber, **the Senate**, was primarily a house of review: it may not initiate legislation, but may amend or reject it. The 32 senators are formally appointed by the President on the nomination of the Great Council of Chiefs (14), the Prime Minister (9), the Leader of the Opposition (8), and the Council of Rotuma (1). Senators as well as

The **Attorney-General**, Fiji's top legal official who sits in the cabinet, is the only Member of Parliament permitted to attend sessions of both chambers. The attorney-general has voting rights only in the chamber to which he or she was elected or appointed, but is authorized to attend and participate in debates in the other chamber.

Judicial branch

Fiji maintains an independent judiciary, with judicial power vested in three courts (the High Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court) established by the Constitution, which also makes provision for other courts to be set up by Parliament, e.g. Magistrates' Courts.

The High Court and the Supreme Court are both presided over by the Chief Justice; the Chief Justice is barred, however, from membership of the **Court of Appeal**, which has its own president. The Appeal Court, which did not exist prior to the 1997 Constitution, has the

power to hear and determine appeals from judgments of the High Court; decisions of this court may be further appealed to the Supreme Court, whose decision is final.

Activities

1. Politics of Fiji take place within the framework of a parliamentary representative **democratic republic**. What does this mean?
2. How is Fiji's president elected?
3. What is the 'leader of the opposition'?
4. How long is the president in office for?
5. What are the two houses of the parliament in the Legislative branch?
6. What is the role of the Senate?
7. What is the role of the Attorney General?
8. What is the judiciary?
9. Name the three courts.
10. What is a 'Constitution'? (Research this.)
11. What is the role of the 'Court of Appeal'?
12. Which court makes the final decision?
14. Who is the current Prime Minister of Fiji and which political party does he represent?
13. Choose one of the following topics for persuasive writing:
 - Democracy is the best form of government.
 - Social media comments should be protected by free speech.
 - Women are under-represented in Parliament; they make up about half the population but are hugely outnumbered by male MPs. Equality matters – we need deeds not words.
 - Job opportunities: Is enough being done to create jobs for young people? Should there be more work experience opportunities for young people in school?
 - Feeding more with less: How can the government and the private sector increase both agricultural productivity and production to sustainably feed a growing population without jeopardizing our natural resources?
 - All students should have an after-school job.
 - All citizens who do not vote should pay a fine.

CITIZENSHIP

- One of the most difficult questions to solve in a newly independent state is that of who may become citizens. The new Constitution allowed for as wide a variety of people as possible to become citizens and thus to enjoy voting rights, the right to hold a Fiji passport and all the normal rights which go with citizenship.
- Anyone who was born, naturalized or registered as a citizen in Fiji before 5th May, 1970 automatically became a citizen. This also applied to those whose fathers came into this category.
- Fiji residents who were classed as 'belongers' could apply to become Fiji citizens after seven years of residence in the country, provided they had not been absent for more than a total of 18 months.
- People who were non-Commonwealth citizens should apply to become naturalized Fiji citizens after nine years of residence with no more than 18 months absence.
- However, nobody could be a citizen of two countries and those applying for Fiji citizenship had to make the decision to give up citizenship of any other country to which they formerly belonged.

Activities

1. Make a summarised list of who is, or who can become a citizen.
2. Choose three symbols below and explain how they relate to government and justice.



Fiji's Early History

Migration by sea in the South Pacific: 2000 BC - AD 800

Probably at first more by accident than design, the islands of the south Pacific are reached by people sailing or drifting from southeast Asia. The first to be settled are those immediately to the east of New Guinea and Australia - the region given in modern times the name of Melanesia. The pottery of the early settlers links them with the people of the Molucca Islands, of East Indonesia.

The Pacific islanders develop a twin-hulled sailing canoe which is an extremely effective sea-going vessel. In boats of this kind, they continue the process of spreading eastwards through Polynesia.



Activities

Name as many islands as you can in:

- a) Melanesia
- b) Polynesia
- c) Micronesia

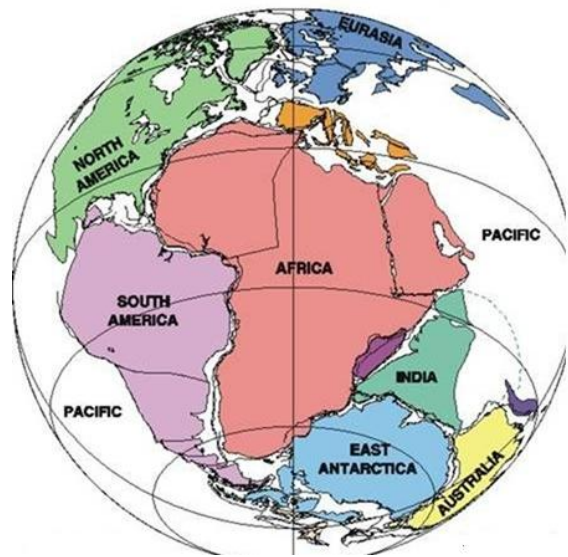
Revision: Where did the Pacific Islanders come from before Indonesia?

All civilization began from the Tower of Babel, (present day Iraq), about 100 years after the Great Flood.

2348 BC – The Great Flood

2242 BC - The Tower of Babel

Immediately after the Flood, the earth was not as we know it today. Originally the continents were joined together, but in 1960 it was scientifically proven that the continents at one stage drifted apart, forming the continents as we know them today. This is called 'continental drift'. Continents today may still be drifting apart at a very slow rate, but at the time of the Flood, and for a short time after, the drift was fast. This is called 'catastrophic plate tectonics'. During the Flood, the ocean floor moved like a conveyor belt. The sinking ocean floor displaced material from the earth's mantle. The earth's crust would have been under such stress that it would have been torn apart, breaking up the pre-Flood supercontinent and the ocean floor. Because people started migrating only about 100 years after the Flood, (after Babel), the continents were not yet completely separated, and for a short window of time, they could walk from one continent to another on land bridges.



So it is possible that the Pacific Islanders walked across land bridges for a large proportion of the way, and sailed the rest of the way.

Early history and culture of Fiji

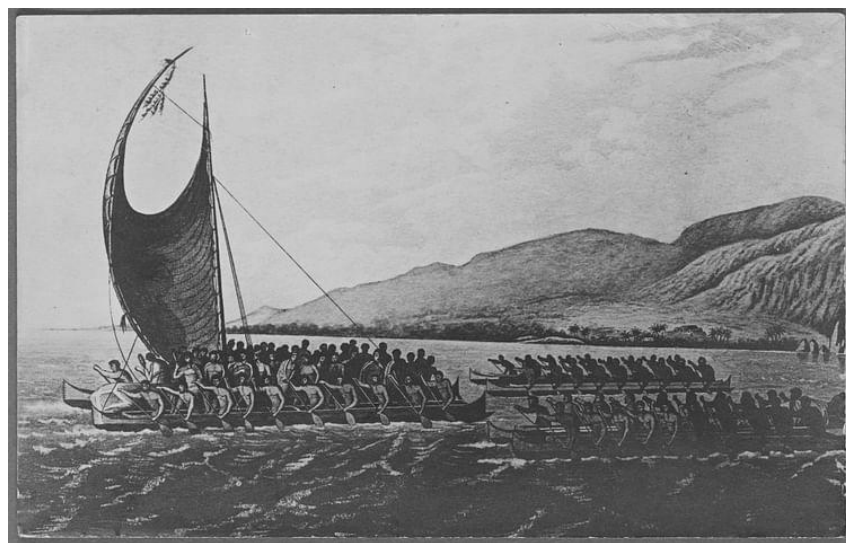
When Fiji's first settlers arrived from the islands of Melanesia, they carried with them a wide range of food plants, the pig, and a style of pottery known as Lapita ware. That pottery is generally associated with peoples who had well-developed skills in navigation and canoe building and were horticulturists. From Fiji the Lapita culture was carried to Tonga and Samoa, where the first distinctively Polynesian cultures developed. In most areas of Fiji, the settlers lived in small communities near ridge forts and practiced a slash-and-burn type of agriculture. In the fertile delta regions of southeast Viti Levu, however, there were large concentrations of population. Those settlements, which were based on intensive taro cultivation using complex irrigation systems, were protected by massive ring-ditch fortifications.

Traditional Fijian society was hierarchical. Leaders were chosen according to rank, which was based on descent as well as personal achievement. Organized through residence and kinship, or clans, there was friendship between some groups but also groups that opposed one another. Led by chiefs, warfare was common.

<https://historyworld.net/history/PacificIslands/553>

Activities

1. Where did Fijian people originate from, prior to the common belief that they came from Indonesia?
2. How could they have travelled from Babel all the way to Fiji?
3. What might they have started travelling?
4. What skills did the first Fijians have?
5. Why did they need 'fortifications'?
6. Read the next section (on the next page). List some cultural traditions of early Fijians.



iTaukei Society Before Colonialism

Language: The iTaukei spoke various Fijian dialects, part of the Austronesian language family.

Culture: Traditional practices like meke (dance and storytelling), yaqona (kava) ceremonies, and intricate handicrafts were central to their way of life.

Social Structure: Society was organized into clans (vanua) and chiefdoms, with chiefs (Ratu or Tui) playing a central role in governance and decision-making.

Economy: The iTaukei practiced subsistence farming, fishing, and traditional crafts, living in close-knit villages.

The iTaukei lived in harmony with their environment, and their traditions and customs were deeply rooted in their connection to the land and sea.

European contact and colonialism in the Fiji Islands

The first Europeans to sight the Fiji Islands were Dutch explorer Abel Janszoon Tasman, who passed the northeast fringe of the group in 1643, and Captain James Cook, who passed the southeastern islands in 1774. Capt. William Bligh travelled through the group in his open longboat after the mutiny on the HMS Bounty in 1789 and returned to explore it in 1792.

Commercial interest in the islands began with the discovery of sandalwood at the beginning of the 19th century, leading to a rush to Bua (Mbua) Bay, at the southwestern end of Vanua Levu. Within little more than a decade the accessible commercial stands of sandalwood were depleted, but by the 1820s traders were again visiting the islands to trade for edible varieties of sea cucumber, the marine invertebrate also known as bêche-de-mer or trepang. Whereas most of the sandalwood had been cut by gangs of foreigners, the bêche-de-mer harvest involved large numbers of Fijians in gathering, cleaning, and drying and in the provision of food and firewood.

Those opportunities for new wealth and power led to the acquisition of muskets (guns). Political rivalries brought about the kingdom of Bau, a tiny island off the east coast of Viti Levu, ruled first by Naulivou and then by his nephew Cakobau. By the 1850s Bau dominated western Fiji. Cakobau's main rival was the Tongan chief Ma'afu from eastern Fiji. Cakobau became a Christian in 1854, thus bringing most Fijians under the influence of Methodist missionaries. Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries arrived later but did not have as much success as the Methodists. You will have already read many stories of how missionaries came to Fiji.

Activities

1. Name two famous explorers who were the first to sight Fiji.
2. Why were the Fiji Islands of great interest to foreigners?

3. What was the first kingdom in Fiji?
4. Who was the first ruler? Who was the second?
5. What changed the rulership of the kingdom of Bau?

The Arrival of Europeans in the 19th Century

The 19th century brought significant changes to Fiji with the arrival of Europeans. Explorers, traders, and missionaries began to visit the islands, and by 1874, Fiji became a British colony. This marked the beginning of a new era for Fiji, as the British introduced large-scale sugarcane plantations to boost the economy.

However, the iTaukei were unwilling to work on these plantations under the harsh conditions imposed by the colonial rulers. This led the British to look elsewhere for labour—ultimately turning to India.

The Indentured Labour System: Indians Come to Fiji

Between 1879 and 1916, over 60,000 Indians were brought to Fiji under the indentured labour system, often referred to as the Girit system (from the word “agreement”). These labourers came primarily from rural areas of northern and southern India, including modern-day Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

What Did the British Promise the Laborers?

The British colonial government made several promises to recruit Indian labourers:

Five-Year Contracts: Laborers were required to work for five years on sugarcane plantations.

Wages: They were promised a small wage (about 10 shillings per month for men and less for women).

Accommodation: Basic housing and rations were provided.

Return Passage: After completing their five-year contract, labourers were promised a free return passage to India.

However, these promises were often not fulfilled. Many labourers faced exploitation, poor living conditions, and were denied their right to return to India.

The First Ship: The Leonidas

The first ship carrying Indian indentured labourers to Fiji was the Leonidas, which arrived on May 14, 1879. Here are some key details about this historic journey:

Departure: The Leonidas left Calcutta (now Kolkata) on March 3, 1879.

Passengers: It carried 463 labourers, including men, women, and children.

Journey: The voyage took about 73 days, and the labourers endured cramped and unsanitary conditions.

Arrival: Upon reaching Fiji, the labourers were sent to work on sugarcane plantations in Nausori, Suva, and other areas.

Life as an Indentured Labourer

Harsh Conditions: Laborers worked long hours on sugarcane plantations, often under brutal conditions. They faced exploitation, poor living conditions, and limited rights.

Resistance and Protests: Over time, labourers protested against the abuse and demanded better conditions, with notable figures like Manilal Doctor advocating for their rights.

End of Indenture: The system was abolished in 1916 due to growing criticism of its exploitative nature. Many Indians chose to stay in Fiji after their contracts ended, as they had little to return to in India or could not afford the journey back.

The Legacy of Indians in Fiji

Today, Indo-Fijians (descendants of Indian labourers) make up a significant portion of Fiji's population (about 35–40%). They have contributed immensely to Fiji's economy, culture, and society, while also preserving their Indian heritage.

Fijian Indians – contributions to society

Language: Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu are still spoken by many Indo-Fijians.

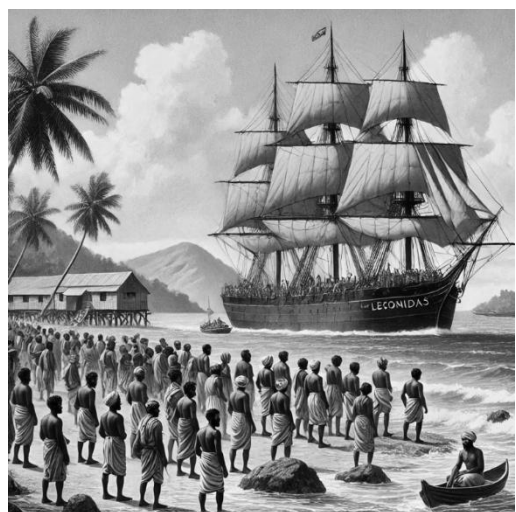
Cuisine: Indian dishes like roti, curry, and sweets have become staples of Fijian cuisine.

Economy: Indian Fijians make a major contribution to the country's economy.

<https://nelishasingh.wordpress.com/2025/03/20/from-india-to-fiji-a-story-of-struggle-survival-and-identity/>

Activities

1. What was the indentured labour system?
2. Why was the system introduced?
3. What were the Indians promised?
4. How did the promises fail to be fulfilled?
5. Describe the journey.
6. In which part of Fiji did the labourers work?
7. Describe their quality of life.



The Early Sugar Industry

Indentured Labourers in Fiji

In the early 1870s, the Cakobau government, (the original Fijian indigenous government), made the first attempt to introduce Indian labourers to Fiji. A growing number of European settlers were trying to grow cotton, because the cotton industry in the United States was weakening leaving a gap in the market. Given that there were not enough i- Taukei workers to supply the necessary labour, the settlers successfully pressured the Cakobau government into asking for labourers from India in 1874. But the British government in India blocked it.

However, in 1874, Fiji also became a British colony and attitudes began to change. The First Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon was opposed to I-Taukeis working for wages especially outside their traditional rural surroundings, introduced measures to keep all i-Taukeis in their villages. But he also faced a labour problem. When Gordon arrived in 1875, a measles epidemic had raged throughout the i-Taukeis village earlier in that year and killed a third of the population. The, i-Taukei were in poor spirits and Gordon did not want to disturb their communal way of living.

From the colonial view, the chief problem was to revive Fiji's economy because Fiji was expected to pay its own way. The cotton industry had recovered in the United States, and instead of planting cotton, settlers were encouraged to develop copra and sugar production. However, these enterprises need a large labour force. Gordon who was previously the Governor of Mauritius, a country which had prospered economically through the importation of Indian labourers, authorized the importation of Indian labourers to come and work in Fiji.

Activities

1. Who was the leader of the first indigenous Fijian government in the early 1870s?
2. Why did European/American settlers come to Fiji at this time?
3. Who did they appeal to for more workers?
4. Who governed India at this time? What was the outcome of appealing for workers?
5. When did Fiji become a British colony?
6. Why was Arthur Gordon originally opposed to employing Fijian labourers?
7. What new agricultural enterprise replaced cotton?
8. Why did Gordon change his mind about importing Indian labourers?

Terms of the Indentured System

Under the system, Indians were to sign a contract to work in Fiji under a five-year indentured system. At the end of the five years term, the Indians were free to return home at their own expense. If they chose to remain for a second term, the Fiji government would pay for their passage home at the end of the term or they could choose to remain in Fiji.

Recruitment

Once the British Government drew up the ordinance and the conditions for indenture, recruitments started in India through their sub agents. The recruiting agents in India were paid on a commission basis and many were unscrupulous in the way they persuaded or enticed uneducated people to consent to go to the unknown, far-off Fiji. Many villagers that happily agreed to accompany the recruiters to the depots to be signed up for work, thought that Fiji was in India.

Some would never willingly have crossed the Indian Ocean, to travel to a distant land such as Fiji, for to cross the sea was to lose their position in society, (their 'caste'). Others were kidnapped while others tried to escape from poverty, the law and family trouble and desire a fresh start. Only a few came with the desire to emigrate.

The first 498 Indian labourers arrived on May 14, 1879 on board the Leonidas. Cholera, smallpox and dysentery had claimed 17 lives during the voyage, and further 15 died during the 90 days quarantine period on Yanuca Lailai. Altogether, over 60,500 labourers signed up.

The System in Practice

The labourers were housed in rows of barracks containing sixteen rooms, each 3 meters by 3.5 meters. These rooms were in double rows, eight in each row, with partitions which stopped short of the ceiling. Each room housed either three single men, or a married man and his wife with up to three children. All living, cooking, eating and sleeping was carried out in this one room in which the inhabitants could not escape from the noise of their neighbours and where they could gain very little privacy, because conditions were so overcrowded, life was very tough and crime and immorality were soon widespread.

The quota of forty women for every hundred men was not kept up. Rumours, accusations, jealousy and fighting were common. No provision was made for educating the children of the labourers and checks on conditions by the government inspector were both infrequent and inadequate. There was also a lack of medical care which resulted in a high death rate.

The pressure of life on the lines was also illustrated by the large number of suicides which occurred. Work done in the fields varied according to the time of the year. The labourers cut cane during harvesting and planted, weeded and cleared drains at other times. Work was often done on the 'task system' by which the worker's allocation for the day was measured out and they were required to complete certain tasks before nightfall. If they failed, they

would receive no wages for that day and were liable to be prosecuted. As overseers and sardars (foreman) were usually paid a bonus if the work was done quickly and cheaply, they tended to over-task the workers, setting tasks which could be completed only by the strongest. However, closer checks on the system after 1905 greatly reduced the amount of over-tasking.

Corporal punishment was often used in the field by overseers and sardars to extract the maximum amount of work and most workers were afraid to report such abuse for fear of reprisals. Even when the government inspectors came, they seldom received the true picture of working conditions because of such fear. When a complaint was lodged and it reached the courts, the workers were still at a disadvantage. They understood little of the workings of the courts and were unable to match the legal aid available to the overseer or sardar. Most cases in which a worker's plea was upheld saw a sentence imposed on the overseer or sardar which was often so light that true justice was seldom seen to be done.

Because of the methods they used, sardars were frequently assaulted. Many labourers also were prosecuted for failure to complete their tasks and they were convicted in nearly every case.

Activities

1. How long was the length of stay to be?
2. What happened if the Indian workers wanted to stay longer?
3. In what way were the recruiting agents unscrupulous?
4. What was the cause of death of some Indians during the passage or on arrival?
5. From the first paragraph under 'The System in Practice' draw two pictures, to show the labourers barracks – inside and outside.
6. From the passage, why do you think the suicide rate was high?

Effects of the indenture system

Breakdown of caste

Most of the immigrants were Hindus and members of castes which had rules forbidding intermarriage or eating with one another. By crossing the sea, the labourers lost caste in the eye of those left behind in India. Furthermore, the cramped conditions of the ships made it impossible to observe all the rules of caste, especially those related eating.

Once in Fiji, all Indians worked in the plantations, no matter what occupation their caste may have followed in India. Indeed, some low caste workers found themselves appointed as sardars, thus not only helping to break down the caste system but also providing them with

power over those formerly regarded as being above them. Intermarriage dealt another blow at the caste system.

Overlying all this was their physical remoteness from India, removing many of the pressures which kept people strictly within their own castes. There was a lack of traditional leadership and knowledge of correct rituals, resulting in a fusing of cultural identities. Consequently, the caste system almost disappeared among the Fiji-Indians.

Prosperity

In spite of the abuses of the indenture system, most of the Indians were better off than they had been in India. Although their work was hard and their conditions were cramped, they were getting a regular wage and were assured of food and shelter. Many became prosperous and although quite a number returned to India with no money, many more took back money or remained in Fiji to invest their earnings.

The end of the indenture system

The evils of any such system always attract more attention than do its benefits. A missionary, J.S.Burton, wrote a book in 1912 in which he outlined the abuses of the indenture system and made a plea for better treatment of the indenture labourers. His attack was taken up in India by G.K.Gokhale (a member of the Legislative Council), who urged the Indian Government to abolish the system.

It was not until C.F. Andrews and W.W. Pearson, (British), were sent to Fiji in 1915 to investigate conditions that the system was abolished. Andrews and Pearson produced a report which gave such a vivid picture of the social evils of the system, that the Indian Government had no alternative but to give way to popular opinion. Recruiting stopped straight away in 1916 and the remaining contracts were cancelled on 2nd of January 1920.

Activities

1. Write a short paragraph to explain what the 'caste' system is. (Research)
2. If a person lost their cast by crossing the sea, why would it be difficult for them to return to India?
3. How did coming to Fiji cause a loss of cultural traditions?
4. What were the positives for some Indians?
5. Who was the first to make a plea for the abolition of the Indenture system?
6. Who, under the British government, finally produced a report?
7. How did this report influence the Indian government?

After indenture

At the time when the indentured system ended, the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company (CSR) had almost full control of the sugar Industry and thus the majority of the indentured labourers came under its control. With the end of the system, the C.S.R. Company was faced with a lack of labour, and so it had to change its land policy.

The Company cut up its land into farms of four hectares to be rented out to these tenant farmers. These tenant farmers are those Indians who remained in Fiji as independent farmers leasing land from the i-Taukei after their contracts were fulfilled plus the many more that remain after 1916.

Other Indians who remained in Fiji took up a variety of jobs such as labourers, skilled tradesmen, clerks and storekeepers. In business, Indians proved highly efficient, and today they control a large proportion of the country's commercial interest.

Industrial troubles occurred frequently between the growers, workers and the mill owners usually over methods of settling price paid for cane. Bitter and violent strikes occurred before, during and after World War II. Cane workers went on strikes in 1957, and cane farmers (growers) engaged in a long strike in the 1960.

CSR and the colonial government gave some concessions but growers were still underpaid. An interesting outcome was the formation of a political organization three years later known as the 'Federation Party' which initially represented cane growers in the northern Viti Levu.

The main outcome of these strikes was the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry under the chairperson of Sir Malcolm Eve thus earning the name, 'the Eve Commission'. The Commission put forward recommendations which were adopted by the Fiji Government. A permanent Sugar Advisory Board was established together with an Advisory Council to assist the board.

The South Pacific Sugar Mill (SPSM) came into being. As a branch of CSR. This meant that now sugar milling was now operated by a Fiji based company directly advised by a local authority, although CSR still kept some control.

The end of colonial sugar refinery

In 1969 arguments over price fixing began once more and with the 10 years contract between the mill and the growers about to expire, an inquiry was set up under Lord Denning although there were no threats of serious trouble.

He recommended the following changes: sharing of the profit in which 65% was to go to the grower and 35% for millers with a guaranteed \$75 per ton for the growers' cane.

Consequently, the CSR Company said that it would be impossible for them to profit from the so they decided to end its operations in Fiji at the end of the 1972 season.

In April 1971, an agreement was signed between the CSR Company and the i-Taukei Government shares in SPSM on 31 March 1973, and purchased the CSR freehold land for \$3.75 million. This was a most advantageous deal for Fiji which obtained holdings worth an estimated \$30 million.

Activities

1. Why did the CSR company have to cut up their land and rent it out to farmers?
2. What were the occupations of the Indians who chose to remain in Fiji?
3. Why did the growers strike?
4. How did the South Pacific Sugar Mill come into being?
5. Who was the main person responsible for the Commission of Inquiry?
6. What is 'price fixing'? (Research)
7. Why did the CSR company withdraw from Fiji?
8. What great advantage was there in this for Fiji?

By 1954, Europeans, Indo-Fijians, and indigenous Fijians were allocated an equal number of seats on the Legislative Council. The mode of election remained different: universal male suffrage for Europeans and an enfranchised wealthy elite for Indians; indigenous Fijians continued to be represented by nominees of the Great Council of Chiefs, and did not vote directly for their own representatives until the general election of 1966, the last election to be held before independence.

From the early 1960s onwards, the Indo-Fijian dominated National Federation Party began campaigning for universal franchise on a common voters' roll. Leaders of the indigenous Fijian community objected to this proposal, fearful that it would grant effective political control to Indo-Fijians, who then comprised a majority of the country's population. A number of compromises were agreed to in the years that followed.

Moving towards independence

The government set up by Sir Arthur Gordon was typical of a Crown colony's government, (British). This meant that the British governor controlled all aspects of government and there was no elected body which was representative of the people.

1904 Constitutional Changes

(i-taukei membership in the legislative council)

In colonial times, the British authorities established a legislative council with mostly advisory powers, which were gradually extended. European males were enfranchised in 1904 and

allocated 7 elective seats in the Legislative Council. Fijians were represented by 2 chiefs chosen by the colonial Governor from a list of 6 nominees submitted by the Great Council of Chiefs.

- The Governor was the Commander-in Chief and he had an advisory Executive Council, (the Legislative Council).
- The Legislative Council consisted of the Governor as President, and six elected members including two i-Taukei members.
- These i-Taukei members were chosen from a list put forward by the Council of Chiefs. The elected members were chosen by voters who were engaged either in agriculture or in the production of sugar, and whose wages were more than 120 pounds a year.
- These members could criticize government policy but could not cause the Governor much trouble.

1916 Constitutional Changes

(indian membership)

There was initially no representation for Indian immigrants or their descendants, but in 1916 they were granted one seat, filled by a nominee of the Governor.

- In 1916 the Legislative Council was enlarged to include twelve nominated (official) members, of whom one was Indian. As yet neither the i-Taukei nor the Indians had the right to elect representatives to the legislative council.

The nominated Indian member was a person who was acceptable to the European interests, but he was not necessarily the leader of the Indian community. This left many Indians unhappy. Until this stage, while the Europeans and the i-Taukei had got some form of representation, the Indians had got none, despite the fact that they numbered to about 22,000.

To be a voter, an Indian had to be of Indian parentage, a British subject, able to read and write, and own or lease property worth 5 pounds a year or earn about 75 pounds a year.

The 1929 Constitutional Changes

- The biggest change in the constitutions came in 1929 when provision was made for the election of Indian representatives.
- The Legislative Council now consisted of the Governor, 13 nominated members, six European elected members, three i-Taukei members and three Indians elected members.

- The i-Taukei members were again selected from a list presented by the Council of Chiefs.

Almost immediately after the new Legislative Council met, the Indian representatives, led by Vishnu Deo, moved that the Indians electors should be placed on the common rolls along with the other British subject. This motion was defeated and the Indian members resigned their seats.

1937 changes

- In 1937, the Legislative Council was again enlarged to the size at which it remained until 1963. It consisted of the Governor, 16 official members, 5 European Members (3 elected, 2 nominated), 5 i- Taukei members, still chosen by the Council of Chiefs and 5 Indian members (3 elected, 2 nominated).
- Of the 16 official members, 3 were automatically appointed because of their position in the government- the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General.

THE SPEAKER

- Up to 1954, this function had been carried out by the Governor, but then provision was made for the appointment of a Speaker of the Legislative Council to act in the Governor's absence. Ratu Sir Lalabalavu Sukuna was appointed as the first full-time speaker in 1956.

1963-new voters

Two major changes took place in 1963

1. The membership of the Legislative Council was again enlarged to consist of the:

- Speaker
- 19 official members and
- 18 unofficial members (4 elected Fijians, 4 elected Indians, 4 elected Europeans, 2 other European and 2 Indian were also nominated by the Governor, while 2 other Fijians were appointed by the Council of Chiefs)

2. Change in the voting system. For the first time, elections were to be held in which the i- Taukei could elect their own representatives. This has been long overdue since most of the i- Taukeis were educated and are becoming conscious of the working government.

At the same time, the right to vote was also given to women, which also acknowledge the active and important roles that women played in community affairs

The 1964 legislative assembly - the membership system

The first real step towards responsible government was taken in July 1964, when the membership system was introduced. Under this system, three members of the Legislative Council appointed to the Executive Councils were placed in charge of governments, with the title of 'Member'.

The three appointed Members were:

1. Mr. J. M. Falvey – was appointed as Member for Communications and Works
2. Ratu K.K.T. Mara – was appointed as Member for Natural Resources.
3. Mr. A. D. Patel – was appointed as Member for Social Service.

For the first time, elected members of the Legislative Council controlled important government departments. However, they were still responsible to the Governor for the running of their departments, and not to the representatives of the people.

Activities

Draw up 6 boxes:

In each box write the following dates:

1904, 1916, 1929, 1937, 1963, 1964

For each date write 2 dot-points, summarizing key events in government for that year.

COMMON VERSUS COMMUNAL ROLL

What is common and communal roll?

Common roll = voting for voting anyone regardless of race. You can vote for anyone you like.

Communal roll = voting along racial lines. You can only vote for your race.

In the smooth move towards the granting of more power to the people there had been one major source of disagreement. Voting had been carried out under separate communal roll.

Electors voted in their racial groups or communities, with i-Taukei electing i-Taukei, Indians electing Indians and European voting for Europeans.

A section of the Indian community felt very strongly that the balance of representation was not even, and that everyone should be placed on one common voting roll to vote for whichever candidates they chose, regardless of race.

They felt that the European electors, who were by far the smallest group, had too many representatives compared with either the i-Taukei or the Indians electors.

A common roll would undoubtedly mean more Indian representative in the Legislative Council since they outnumbered the i-Taukei and other electors.

Opposition to this common roll was based on the belief that i-Taukei place in their own land should be preserved and that their interest should not be swamped by those of other races.

The 1965 Constitution

By 1965, it was felt that Fiji was ready to take a further step towards self-government, and a conference was held in London to discuss changes to be made in the constitution.

In a dispatch to the Governor of Fiji, the Secretary of State for the colonies, Anthony Greenwood, said:

“The purpose of the conference will be to work out a constitutional framework which will preserve a continuing link between Britain, and within which further progress can be made in the direction of internal self-government for Fiji.”

It was apparent before the conference started that one of the main issues would be that of a common roll. Even before the delegates left for London, there had been much argument about it, and the members of the Federation Party, who wanted the common roll, refused to meet with the remaining delegates in order to work out a program for the conference.

On 26th July, the Conference opened, and by 28th July it had reached a deadlock over the question of the common roll.

The Federation Party members insisted that the common roll should be introduced, while the remaining members wanted some sort of compromise.

Discussion on the other issues continued. Finally, a new constitution for Fiji was finally formulated.

The most important change was made in the membership of the Legislative Council. This was increased to thirty-six members, of whom twelve were Indian members, fourteen were i-Taukei members, and ten members represented Europeans and other races. The latter were called general members.

Of these, nine i-Taukei, nine Indians and seven general members were selected on separate communal rolls. In addition, two i-Taukei members were elected by the Council of Chiefs.

The remaining nine members were elected on a system of cross-voting, by which a compromise had been made in the question of common roll.

Under this system, the colony was divided into three large constituencies, in each of which electors voted for one i-taukei, one Indian and one general representative.

In this way all races voted for candidate of other races. There was a maximum of four official members in the Legislative Council. The racial balance had thus been changed, with the reduction in the proportion of Europeans and General seats, although some still argued that the balance was still not right. The i-Taukei interest was still safeguarded by the two extra seats, a matter which brought more criticism from those who supported the cause of common roll.

Towards responsible government

- The 1965 Constitution had taken Fiji one step further towards full responsible government. The Ministers controlling government departments were now elected by people rather than nominated by the Governor.
- This system was also closer to responsible government in that all seats in the 1966 elections (held under the new Constitution) were contested by two political parties, the Federation Party and the Alliance. The Alliance gained a majority and so the ministers were chosen from its ranks. The Office of Chief Minister went to the leader of the Alliance, Ratu K. K. T. Mara. This was partly normal responsible, for those ministers appointed to their posts as a result of the elections could be removed by further elections if their actions should prove unpopular.
- However, this system did not give full responsible government. The Governor still retained full powers in matters of defence, external affairs, internal affairs, internal security and the public service. The last step to full responsible government was yet to come- the passing of powers to a parliament drawn fully from the elected representatives of the people.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

- Included in the Constitution was a Bill of Rights which guaranteed to every person in Fiji, regardless of race, place of origin, colour, religion, sex, or political opinion, all personal liberties and basic freedoms – the rights of life, liberty, security of person and protection of the law and the freedom of conscience, expression and assembly or association.

Self-Government Approaches

- After the 1966 elections the Federation Party worked cooperatively with the Alliance for eleven months. However, with the introduction of the ministerial system, Mr. Patel denounced the Constitution and the Federation members walked out of the Legislative Council. Eventually the seats were declared vacant and a by- election was held in which all Federation Party members were returned with an increased majority.
- This produced a bitter reaction among the i-Taukei supporters of the Alliance, realizing that they had to take the lead in moving Fiji toward independence. Many of the younger i-Taukei leaders were pressing for this policy and in November 1968 the Great Council of Chiefs passed a resolution calling for an early constitutional conference.
- However, the British Government had already made it clear that it would not consider a new conference until the two major parties had reached some agreement on the main points that divided them. The Alliance wanted to keep the link with the British Crown and was determined that there should be no common roll. The Federation Party insisted on common roll and wanted the immediate independence of Fiji as a democratic republic within the Commonwealth.
- However at around this time A.D. Patel sadly passed away and was replaced by S.M. Koya as leader of the Federation Party. Following further negotiation and after the November talks, the Alliance and the Federation Party announced that they had reached complete agreement that the next move should be for 'self-government with Dominion Status'. This meant that Fiji would become a nation with an independent government, while remaining a full member of the British Commonwealth.
- As a result, talks were held in Fiji in January 1970 between Lord Shepherd, representing the British Government, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and S. M. Koya. These talks brought further agreement that Fiji should become a Dominion, having its own responsible government with full powers to control all its affairs.

Second constitutional conference

- Between 20 April and 5 May 1970, the Second Constitutional Conference was held at Marlborough House in London. Originally scheduled to last one week, the conference had to be extended for a second week when a deadlock was reached over the question of voting under the new constitution.
- It was also decided that Fiji was to become independent on the 10th October, 1970.

The new constitution

- The Parliament of Fiji changed, both in its size and its shape. There were two Houses: the Senate, (or Upper House) and the House of Representatives, (or Lower House).
- The Senate consisted of 22 members, 8 nominated by the Council of Chiefs, 7 by the Prime Minister, 6 by the Leader of the Opposition and 1 by the Council of Rotuma.

THE UPPER HOUSE

- Members of the Senate were appointed for six years, with eleven of them retiring every three years.
- The Senate's task was to look closely at legislation passed by the House of Representatives, to suggest necessary amendments or even to delay a bill.
- The House of Representatives, the former Legislative Council, now consisted of 52 members, with 22 i-Taukei, 22 Indian and 8 general seats. 12 i-Taukei, 12 Indian and 3 general representatives were elected on communal rolls, while 10 i-Taukei, 10 Indian and 5 general representatives were elected on the national roll (the old cross-voting system)

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- The Cabinet consisted of ministers and assistant ministers appointed from either House to give the Prime Minister freedom of choice in selecting the best, available people.
- The Senate had a President and a Vice –President elected from its members, while the affairs of the House of Representatives were presided over by a Speaker and Deputy-Speaker elected from its members. The Head of State was the Queen of England.

Activities

1. What is the difference between a Common and Communal roll?
2. What are the pros and cons of voting along the lines of the Common Roll? What does it mean for minority racial groups?
3. What is the Bill of Rights?
4. How many constitutional conferences were held to negotiate Fiji's independence?
5. Where were they held?
6. What is the date for Fiji's independence?
7. What are the two houses that the new constitution initiated?
8. What is the difference between the Upper and Lower houses?

CITIZENSHIP

- One of the most difficult questions to solve in a newly independent state is that of who may become citizens. The new Constitution allowed for as wide a variety of people as possible to become citizens and thus to enjoy voting rights, the right to hold a Fiji passport and all the normal rights which go with citizenship.
- Anyone who was born, naturalized or registered as a citizen in Fiji before 5 May 1970 automatically became a citizen. This also applied to those whose fathers came into this category.
- Fiji residents who were classed as 'belongers' could apply to become Fiji citizens after seven years of residence in the country, provided they had not been absent for more than a total of 18 months.
- People who were non-Commonwealth citizens should apply to become naturalized Fiji citizens after nine years of residence with no more than 18 months absence.
- However, nobody could be a citizen of two countries and those applying for Fiji citizenship had to make the decision to give up citizenship of any other country to which they formerly belonged.

THE NEW NATION

- On achieving independence, Fiji took its place as the newest member of the United Nations Organization and established diplomatic links abroad. Semesa Sikivou, a man of wide political and administrative experience, was appointed first representative to the United Nations and High Commissioner to the United States and Canada. At the same time, Fiji set up a High Commissioner's office in London under Josua Rabukawaqa and another in Canberra under Raman Nair.
- There were then four independent states in the South Pacific: Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa and Nauru. The Cook Islands were self-governing while at the same time maintaining a close link with their former administering country, New Zealand.
- Papua New Guinea was also moving towards independence (achieved in 1975). Although the most recently independent, Fiji was regarded as the most economically and politically advanced of these states and seemed sure to have a major part to play in Pacific affairs.

In April 1970, a constitutional conference in London agreed that Fiji should become a fully sovereign and independent nation within the Commonwealth of Nations. Fiji became independent on 10 October of that year.

Activities

1. What is 'the Commonwealth'?
2. What advantages do you see for Fiji to be part of the Commonwealth? Are there any disadvantages?
3. Who could become a citizen?
4. How could people of non-Commonwealth countries become citizens?
5. Is it possible to be a citizen of two countries?
6. Which other Pacific nations were independent at the time that Fiji became independent?
7. Why was it expected that Fiji would have a major role in Pacific affairs?

The two coups of 1987

On May 14, 1987, Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka along with 10 soldiers in gas masks hijacked and confined the elected government of Timoci Bavadra. For the coup leader he was protecting an elected government from the wrath of the indigenous nationalist Taukei Movement, which organized noisy demonstrations in April 1987

Dr. Timoci Bavadra, an ethnic Fijian who was nevertheless supported mostly by the Indo-Fijian community, won the general election and formed Fiji's first majority Indian government, with Dr. Bavadra serving as prime minister. After less than a month in office, Dr. Bavadra was forcibly removed from power during a military coup led by Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka on 14 May 1987. Rabuka had served with the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Lebanon.

After a period of continued negotiation, Rabuka staged a second coup on 25 September 1987. The military government revoked the constitution and declared Fiji a Republic on 10 October, the seventeenth anniversary of Fiji's independence from the United Kingdom. This action, coupled with protests by the government of India, led to Fiji's expulsion from the Commonwealth and official non-recognition of the Rabuka regime by foreign governments, including Australia and New Zealand. On 6 December, Rabuka resigned as head of State, and the former governor-general, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, was appointed the first president of the Fijian Republic. Mara was reappointed prime minister, and Rabuka became minister of home affairs.

The new government drafted a new constitution that went into force in July 1990. Under its terms, majorities were reserved for ethnic Fijians in both houses of the legislature. Previously, in 1989, the government had released statistical information showing that for the first time since 1946, ethnic Fijians were a majority of the population. More than 12,000 Indo-Fijians and other minorities had left the country in the two years following the 1987

coups. After resigning from the military, Rabuka became the Prime Minister under the new constitution in 1992.

Ethnic tensions simmered in 1995-1996 over the renewal of Indo-Fijian land leases and political manoeuvring surrounding the mandated 7-year review of the 1990 constitution. The Constitutional Review Commission produced a draft constitution which slightly expanded the size of the legislature, lowered the proportion of seats reserved by ethnic group, reserved the presidency for ethnic Fijians but opened the position of prime minister to all races. Prime Minister Rabuka and President Mara supported the proposal, while the nationalist indigenous Fijian parties opposed it.

The reformed constitution was approved in July 1997. Fiji was readmitted to the Commonwealth in October. The first legislative elections held under the new constitution took place in May 1999. Rabuka's coalition was defeated by an alliance of Indo-Fijian parties led by Mahendra Chaudhry, who became Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister.

The coup of 2000

Chaudhry's government was short-lived. After barely a year in office, Chaudhry and most other members of parliament were taken hostage in the House of Representatives by gunmen led by ethnic Fijian nationalist George Speight, on 19 May 2000. The standoff dragged on for 8 weeks — during which time Chaudhry was removed from office by the then-president Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara because of his inability to govern — before the Fijian military seized power and brokered a negotiated end to the situation, then arrested Speight when he violated its terms. Former banker Laisenia Qarase was named interim prime minister and head of the interim civilian government by the military and the Great Council of Chiefs in July. A court order restored the constitution early in 2001, and a subsequent election confirmed Qarase as Prime Minister.

The coup of 2006

Disgruntled by two bills before the Fijian Parliament, one offering amnesty for the leaders of the 2000 coup, the military leader Commodore Frank Bainimarama asked Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase to resign in mid-October, 2006. The Prime Minister attempted to sack Bainimarama without success. Australian and New Zealand governments expressed concerns about a possible coup.

On 4 November 2006, Qarase dropped the controversial amnesty measures from the bill. On 29 November New Zealand foreign minister Winston Peters organised talks in Wellington between Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase and Commodore Bainimarama. Peters reported the talks as "positive" but after returning to Fiji Commodore Bainimarama announced that the military were to take over most of Suva and fire into the harbour "in anticipation of any foreign intervention".

Bainimarama announced on 3 December 2006 that he had taken control of Fiji.

Bainimarama restored the presidency to Ratu Josefa Iloilo on 4 January 2007, and in turn was formally appointed Interim Prime Minister by Iloilo the next day.

2009 constitutional crisis

On April 10, 2009, Fijian President, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, announced on a nationwide radio broadcast that he had suspended the Constitution of Fiji, dismissed the Court of Appeal and assumed all governance in the country after the court ruled that the current government is illegal.

Most of Fiji's political controversies are related to the ethnic fault line that characterizes Fijian politics. Fiji is one of the rare countries in the world that officially imposes disabilities on a group that constitutes a large part of the population on the pretended basis of race. It has caused an exodus of the Indians, who until recently formed a slight majority in Fiji.

One of the main issues that have fuelled the contention over the years is land tenure. Indigenous Fijian communities very closely identify themselves with their land. In 1909 near the peak of the inflow of indentured Indian labourer's, the land ownership pattern was frozen and further sales prohibited. Today over 80% of the land is held by indigenous Fijians, under the collective ownership of the traditional Fijian clans. Indo-Fijians produce over 90% of the sugar crop but must lease the land they work from its ethnic Fijian owners instead of being able to buy it outright. The leases have been generally for 10 years, although they are usually renewed for two 10-year extensions. Many Indo-Fijians argue that these terms do not provide them with adequate security and have pressed for renewable 30-year leases, while many ethnic Fijians fear that an Indo-Fijian government would erode their control over the land.

The Indo-Fijian parties' major voting bloc is made up of sugarcane farmers. The farmers' main tool of influence has been their ability to galvanize widespread boycotts of the sugar industry, thereby crippling the economy.

Multiple citizenship, previously prohibited under the 1997 constitution (abrogated April 2009), has been permitted since the April 2009 Citizenship Decree and established as a right under Section 5(4) of the September 2013 Constitution.

Activities

1. What is a coup?
2. What are the dates for the Fiji coups?
3. Explain the main reasons for the occurrence of a coup.
4. For each of the coups, write the date and give three dot-point summary facts for each.