Diplomacy and Fiji

5

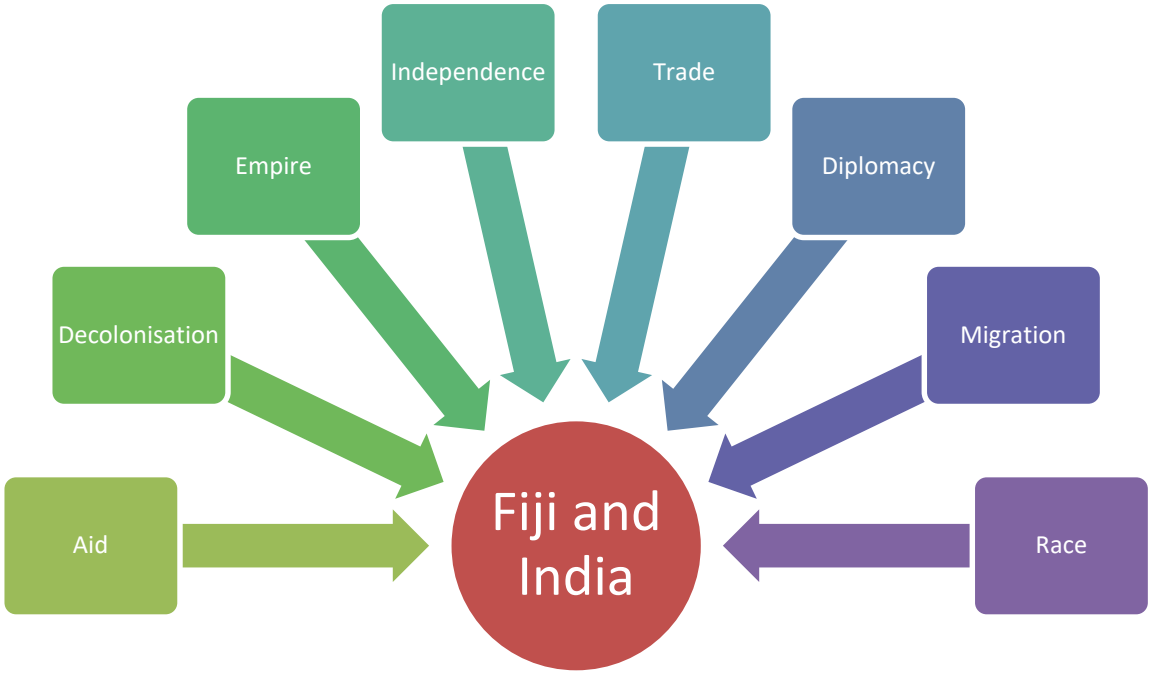
FIJI AND INDIA

Y12C

By Laisani Cama, Max Quanchi and Robert Norton

CONCEPT MAP

KEY CONCEPTS FOR STUDY THIS UNIT



DEFINITIONS

Decolonisation	Gaining independence from a colonial power
Trade	Economic links; A major form of relationships between nations
Aid	Monies given by donor nations to help neighbours and less wealthy nations
Empire	(i) A world-wide network of colonies (ii) Refers also to Loyalty or opposition to Britain
Diplomacy	(i) The skill of making the correct decision in foreign policy (ii) The formal and informal meetings between nations
Independence	The action of re-gaining the rule of your own nation
Migration	Social and personal links; A major form of relationships between nations
Race	Distinguishing between people on the basis of skin colour, heritage or ethnicity.

STUDY ORGANIZER

Before you begin check the objectives, skills and the activities we will be covering.

Objectives	Skills	Activities
At the end of this unit you should be able to: • Identify key events in Fiji's relations with India • Analyse the cause and effect of events • Describe the role played by individual leaders • Compare propaganda and policy • Describe the importance of nations maintaining good international relations	• Analysing • Searching • Identifying • Comparing • Describing • Distinguishing • Chronology (See below for explanation of these skills.)	Summary and Questions and activities 1 based on Official Views 2 based on UN, UK and India 3 based on the role of PM Ratu Mara 4 based on 1960s constitutional debates 5 based on PMs visits 6 based on Girmit Centenary

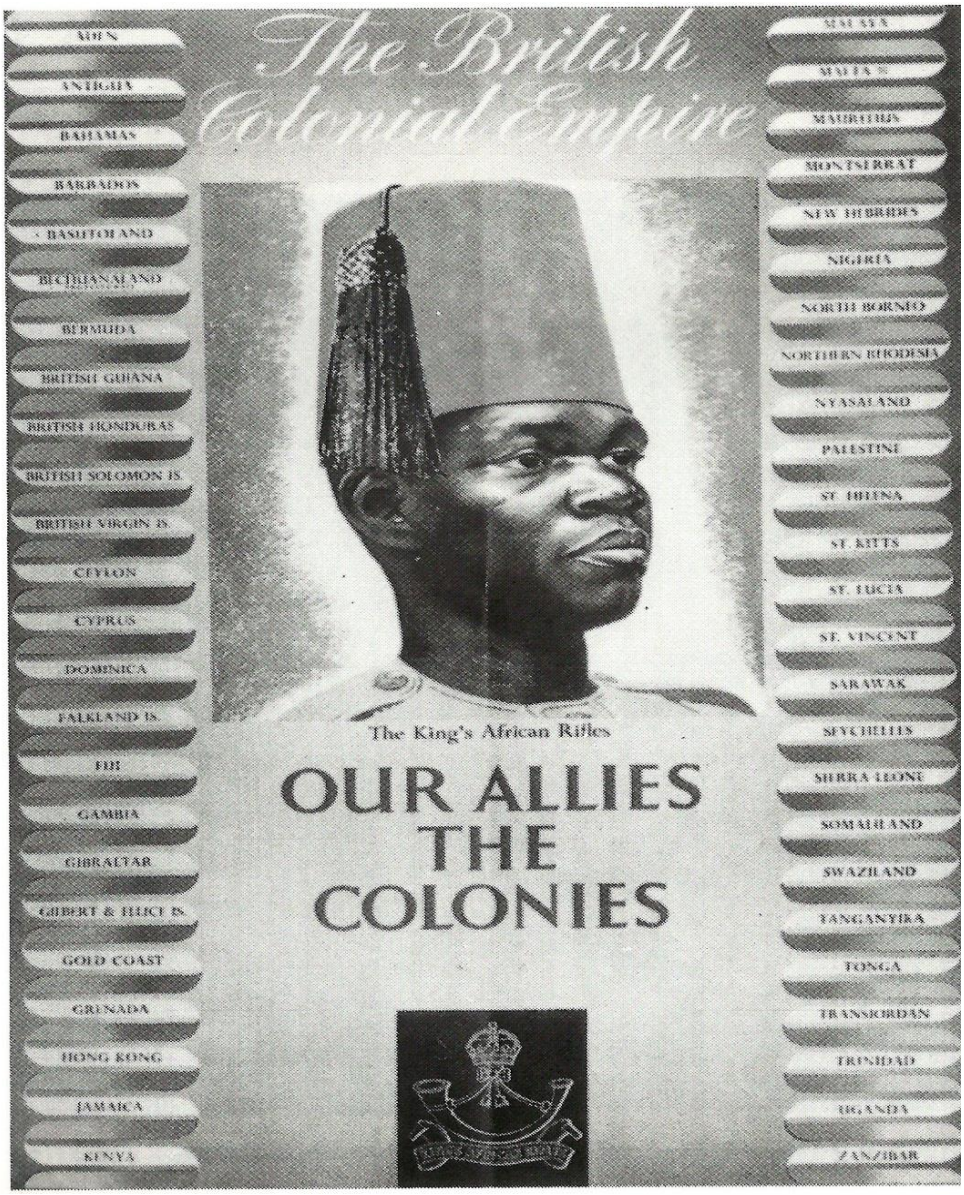
ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIT

There are seven topics spread across thirteen weeks (five lessons per week);

1 Fiji and International Relations (the introduction) (1 week)
2 Fiji and New Zealand (1 week)
3 Fiji and the two Chinas (2 weeks)
4 Fiji and Australia (2 weeks)
5 Fiji and India (1 Week)
6 Fiji and the European Union (1 week)
7 Fiji and the World – Research projects (2 weeks)
(Note: three weeks are set aside for Enrolment, Revision and Examinations)

In each topic there are skills that you will learn. These are the skills of an historian and include;

- Analysing evidence (what does a speech, document, photo, treaty, etc, include, and not include)
- Searching for additional and unusual evidence
- Identifying the motives of nations involved in regional and international affairs
- Comparing the policies in the past and in the present
- Chronology – being able to place events in the order in which they occurred
- Describing the context – the local, regional and global influences that affected events
- Distinguishing between policy, rhetoric and propaganda.



Source; "Our allies; The Colonies", c1941; in Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London: Abacus Books, 1995, p.181. Original: the Imperial War Museum, London.

This poster was produced during World War II, when Britain was threatened with invasion. Loyal British colonies rallied and soldiers enlisted from Fiji and India, fighting for the 'Empire'. There is no caption. The reader must find the message (or messages) and draw their own conclusions.

Historians might ask the following type of questions

Why did Britain need to advertise the loyalty of its colonial subjects?
What was the actual relationship between Britain and colonies like India and Fiji?
Was the poster really targeting the big colonies, with big populations?
Why was Britain calling the war in Europe a war for the Empire to fight?
Who would have seen this poster?
Would this poster have been displayed in Fiji, or in India?

1 INTRODUCTION; FIJI AND INDIA

India is a massive Asian nation in the Northern hemisphere with more than a billion people while Fiji is a small archipelago in the South Pacific with less than 1 million people. Despite the differences in size, language, culture and population, historically Fiji and India had a close relationship. They were both British colonies, joint members of the British Empire and then Commonwealth, and for much of the 20th century people of Indian **descent** formed half the population of Fiji. After both nations gained their independence, the respective Prime Ministers often visited each other, and India is an aid donor to Fiji.

The historical links in the 19th century and up to the 1960s were extensive;

- Girmit brought 60000 indentured labourers to Fiji
- Both were colonies and members of the British Empire
- Indian politicians watched events in Fiji closely
- Both had supported Britain in World War II
- Methodist missionaries with experience in India came to Fiji to serve
- By the 1980s over half the population of Fiji were of Indian descent

After Fiji's independence in 1970, Fiji continued its relationship with India after 1970. These links included;

- links between Trade Unions, Churches, and schools,
- sporting visits each way
- family visits
- links between political parties
- medical exchange programs.
- trade, tourism and migration
- joint membership of regional organizations
- joint membership of the British Commonwealth
- scholarships for Fijians to study in India

The Fijian High Commission in India described the relationship in 2013 as 'crucial', 'greatly valued', 'advantageous' and of 'mutual advantage'. The home-page of the Indian High Commission in Fiji is more specific. It refers readers immediately to the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), suggesting it is the main link between the two nations. In 2012, in comparison, the *Fiji Times* referred to the links as 'strong'. On the sporting field, workplace and streets of Suva, Sigatoka, Labasa, Nadi, and Lautoka and elsewhere a relationship with India is obvious, but at the diplomatic level it is often hidden behind glib phrases and **rhetoric.**

This unit looks at India's involvement in Fiji's decolonisation, Ratu Mara's visits to India, Indira Ghandi's visit to Fiji, Laiseni Qarase's visit to India, and the centenary of Girmit in 1979. The unit covers events in the 1960s leading up to Independence, the international context of the Fiji-India links after independence, and analyses the visits of several Prime Ministers to each other's nation.

This unit suggests that a study of certain historical events and people will highlight the unevenness of Fiji's relationship with India. The unit also reveals some previously not well-known details about links of a personal and political nature.

2 THE OFFICIAL VIEW

This section introduces the official view. That is, what does each government say about their relationships with the other.

Official statements and speeches are **sanitized** rather than critical or historical opinions. (Sanitized means 'to make clean'). In international relations, this means that nations state the bare facts and always highlight the positive and friendly relationships. These statements could be considered **propaganda**, promoting a particular policy or behavior. They are also 'official' statements. That means they reflect each government's policies towards another nation. A good historian will always try to compare 'official' statements and propaganda and public speeches against other evidence – the opinions of people who were involved, critics, victims, supporters and observers like journalists and academics.

Below we look at three examples, from the homepages of the Fiji's High Commission in India, and the Indian high Commission in Fiji, and a newspaper report.

SOURCE 1; FIJI HIGH COMMISSION IN INDIA; HOME-PAGE

Even in the early stages, the importance of relations between Fiji and India was underscored with the High Level visits by Fiji's then Prime Minister and late President, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's visit to India in 1971 which was reciprocated by India's Prime Minister, the late Smt. Indira Gandhi, who visited Fiji in 1981. India was also a crucial ally for Fiji in its independence struggle and the two countries have been side-by-side in championing developing country issues. Fiji has greatly valued India's leadership and guidance in forums such as G77 & NAM and more recently the WTO, where with India's help; concerns of the developing countries were brought to the mainstream. In 2002, as part of India's 'Look East' policy and further to India's dialogue partnership of the ASEAN, India successfully applied to become a dialogue partner of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), with the support of the Fiji Government. The dialogue partnership of PIF provides India and the Pacific Region a structured mechanism of interaction on issues of mutual importance. In an increasingly inter-connected global environment, coupled with the rise of India as a global (economic and political) player, the broadening and deepening of bilateral relations is advantageous to Fiji, both in terms of Fiji's international profile (engagement and partnership with a powerful global player) and Fiji's economic prosperity and development aspirations. If Fiji can lay the foundations of a strong relationship with India, it will be in a favorable position to reap the benefits of India's present and projected phenomenal growth.

Source; http://www.fijihc-india.in/Bi-relation.aspx

SOURCE 2 INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN FIJI; HOME-PAGE

The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) was established on 14 August 1972 in Suva, Fiji. The idea of setting up the Indian Cultural Centre was conceived at the time of H.E. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's visit to India in February, 1971. The joint communiqué issued following the meeting with Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi stated: "It was agreed by the Prime Ministers that steps be taken to establish an Indian Cultural Centre in Fiji".

Indian Cultural Centre, Suva was the first Cultural Centre abroad established by the Government of India through Indian Council for Cultural Relations. H.E. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Prime Minister of Fiji inaugurated the Indian Cultural Centre on 14 August 1972. The Sub-Centre of ICC in Lautoka was inaugurated by the Speaker of Indian Parliament, H.E. Somnath Chatterjee on 8 September, 2005.

The Indian Cultural Centre, Suva offers courses in Carnatic Vocal Music, Kathak and Bharatnatyam Dance, Indian Classical Instrumental -Tabla/ Harmonium with Vocal, Yoga and Hindi. Sub-Centre, Lautoka offers courses in Bharatnatyam Dance, Indian Classical Instrumental -Tabla/ Harmonium with Vocal and Yoga. All disciplines are conducted by part time local teachers in three groups: Beginner, Intermediate & Advance with standardized syllabus. All the classes are free. Along with regular class activities, ICC also organizes Cultural Evenings, Exhibitions, film shows, Performance of Dance & Music, Seminars and Workshops. It also covers outreach activities through gifting of books and musical instruments, and lectures on Indian cultural heritage and maintains contact with cultural, educational and creative organizations. General Cultural Scholarship Scheme (GCSS) scholarships …. Also, AYUSH scholarships are offered to meritorious nationals of Fiji.

Source: http://indianhighcommission.org.fj/event_in_fiji.php

SOURCE 3 *THE FIJI TIMES*; FLOOD RELIEF FUNDING

Fiji and India ties remain strong, By Ioane Burese, Friday, July 06, 2012

"Fiji and India share special ties which remain strong. The statement was made by Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama after the Indian government gave $360,000 to the Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund. A government statement said Commodore Bainimarama commended the Indian government for the monetary gift, which he said the people of Fiji were grateful for. "We are grateful for the considerable donation and it is very kind indeed for the Indian government to assist those affected by the floods," he told Indian High Commissioner Vinod Kumar. Mr Kumar said … "India and Fiji have close relations and this is a small token of support for the people devastated by the floods"..

Source: Fiji Times online at http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=205773

ACTIVITY 1 QUESTIONS BASED ON SOURCES (1), (2) AND (3) BELOW

1 (a) Answer yes or no to these questions:

Yes ( ) or No ( ) India gives aid to Fiji
Yes ( ) or No ( ) A Fijian Prime Minister has visited India
Yes ( ) or No ( ) A Indian prime Minister has visited Fiji
Yes ( ) or No ( ) Cultural links are strong
Yes ( ) or No ( ) India and Fiji have common interests
Yes ( ) or No ( ) Fiji can benefit from being a friend of India

(b) Now discuss your answers with a classmate.
(c) After discussing you might change your answers.
(d) Finally, hold a class discussion on the response to the questions.

2 Of the words used in the three sources, which is the best word to describe the India-Fijian relationships (tick the word that you choose)

( ) 'crucial'
( ) 'greatly valued'
( ) 'advantageous'
( ) mutual advantage'
( ) 'special ties'
( ) 'close relations'
( ) 'strong relationship'

3 Now use that word in one sentence to describe the India- Fiji relationship today.

_____

_____

_____

5 The expression "special ties", is used in the sources above. In your own opinion, comment on the idea that there is a special relationship between Fiji and India? In two sentences state what is special about this relationship?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 INDIA, BRITAIN, UN AND FIJI; MOVES TO SELF-GOVERNMENT

After achieving its independence from British rule in 1947, India did not immediately attempt to pressure Britain to end its colonial rule elsewhere. Many in Fiji either hoped or feared it would. Mahatma Gandhi had once declared: "When India is free, the rest will follow".

Instead, in Fiji the Commissioner for the Government of India (later called the High Commissioner) urged local Indians to befriend their "brothers and sisters", the indigenous ITaukei. Indians were urged to maintain a **moderate** approach on political matters. They should regard India as their cultural motherland, but Fiji as their political fatherland.

India changed its stance on self-government in Fiji in the early to mid-1960s as the world-wide campaigning increased to grant independence to all former colonies. Together with such countries as the USSR and Tanzania, India now took a leading part in a new United Nations push for the rapid and unconditional ending of colonial rule throughout the world.

The UN called on Britain to move Fiji toward self-government and a common franchise. An international call for a common **franchise** in voting in elections in Fiji encouraged the leading Fiji Indian political party, the Federation Party, to embark on outspoken campaign for this change.

The Federation Party assured its ITaukei and Indo-Fijian worker followers that the UN and "world opinion" was on its side and that Britain would be compelled to comply with the UN resolutions. The Federation Party's campaign provoked a hostile response from the ITaukei and European leaders who believed that the introduction of a common franchise would result in Indian political domination (Fiji Indians were then 51% of the population).

British officials were having great difficulty persuading the conservative, reluctant ITaukei political leaders to agree to any substantial move toward self-government, let alone a common franchise. The decolonisation planned by the British initially contemplated a change from the old racially divided electoral system to the common franchise. Britain was soon convinced by advisors and 'experts' that an attempt to impose this would risk a violent ITaukei reaction.

The Federation Party's confidence in continuing United Nations pressure on Britain helped to create political and ethnic tension in Fiji. This tension grew especially after the 1966 Legislative Council elections when the colonial Governor gave Ratu Kamisese Mara and his fellow Alliance Party leaders, mostly iTaukei, a large share in government.

British efforts to seek India's agreement to encourage moderation at the UN succeeded during the highpoint of tension in Fiji in 1967-1968. The aim of the British was to use India to persuade the UN General Assembly that Fiji's political independence could be best achieved by a gradual and cautious approach to change.

Britain wanted India to support the view that Fiji needed a policy that took account of its particular problems and complexity (the ethnic division and inequality), and the special claims of ITaukei.

ACTIVITY 2 QUESTIONS BASED ON INDIA, BRITAIN, the UN AND FIJI

1 Who were the key players in the history of Fiji's move towards self-government? Rank these in order from 1 (most important) to least important (5)

( ) The UN
( ) Britain
( ) India
( ) Federation Party
( ) Mahatma Gandhi
( ) Ratu Kamisese Mara

2 During the moves towards self-government, who argued that;

When India is free, the rest will follow.
Answer _____

Britain should move Fiji toward self-government and a common franchise.

Answer _____

Britain would be compelled to comply with the UN resolutions

Answer _____

The introduction of a common franchise would result in Indian political domination

Answer _____

The Alliance Party leaders should have a large share in government.

Answer _____

3 When did British efforts to secure Indian's sympathy on the Fiji question succeed?

_____

_____

4 What was the effect of events in 1967-1968? Choose one answer.

( ) agreement for a moderate, gradual and cautious approach to change
( ) immediate granting of Independence
( ) acknowledgement of special claims by iTaukei

4. RATU MARA'S PART IN THE WOOING OF INDIA

Ratu Mara played a crucial role in the campaign to gain India's approval. His ability enabled him to convince India of the wisdom of changing its UN position on the Fiji question. This eliminated India as a major supporter of the Federation Party's policy of major changes.

Mara's approach to India began with a visit to New Delhi in September 1967. This was part of his first international tour as Chief Minister. India's government heard a first-hand account of the reasons for Fijian resistance to the implementation of UN resolutions for rapid and radical change. Mara made a very favourable impression. Mara had already made a good impression talking informally with UN delegates in New York before arriving in India. By the end of 1968, the government of India was preparing to abandon its severe stance against Britain at the UN. India began to encourage other UN delegates to do likewise; indeed several African and Asian country delegates had already made this change of policy.

The next step in the development of a new Fiji-India relationship was the visit to Fiji in January 1968 of two senior Indian government officials, Mr Jaipal and Mr Kaul. They had confidential meetings with local leaders in order to make an assessment of the political situation. Their impressions largely reinforced the understanding gained in New Delhi from the talks with Mara: the need for a gradual approach to reform in Fiji.

Jaipal and Kaul also voiced their own views and made suggestions. They disapproved of the Federation Party's outspoken policy in pursuit of the common franchise. However, they agreed, as did Mara, that this must be a long term goal. Jaipal and Kaul urged Mara and Federation leader AD Patel to begin private talks toward an agreement on such controversial matters as;

- reducing European representation in the colonial parliament
- increasing the number of multiracial electorates with ethnically reserved seats (several such electorates had been introduced for the 1966 elections).

India was now involving itself directly in Fiji's politics, as well as indirectly via the UN.

Ratu Mara met India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for the first time in mid-1968. This was a chance encounter at an overseas airport; (Mrs Gandhi had been away from India at the time of Mara's visit in 1967). Mara made a "deep impression" on Gandhi, an Indian official later told the British High Commissioner in Delhi. The Indian Prime Minister agreed to send another government minister to Fiji toward the end of the year. The new visiting team would continue the attempts begun by Jaipal and Kaul to urge moderation on the Federation Party leaders and encourage Mara and Patel to resume their private talks. Mr Hathi, the new man sent from India, arrived in the midst of ethnic tension. This had been worsened by the Federation Party victories in by-elections for the boycotted Indian seats in the Legislative Council. There were aggressive ITaukei protest marches against this outcome. In the context of widespread local alarm at the recent crisis, Hathi's efforts were influential. His diplomacy helped encourage a **conciliatory** mood, particularly among the Federation Party leaders.

There was no critical debate or resolution on Fiji at the UN in 1968, nor in the following year. In 1969, the UN accepted reports from the UN *Special Committee on Colonialism* that reported progress was being made in the Suva talks.

ACTIVITY 3: ON THE ROLE OF RATU MARA

1 List the year and the names of the Indian government visitors to Fiji.

Year Names

_____ _____

_____ _____

2 In which year did Ratu Mara meet Mrs Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister

_____

3 It was said that Ratu Mara made a "deep impression" – what does this mean when two Prime Minsters meet? Select one of the following possible meanings of "good impression".

( ) India changed its policy because of Ratu Mara's chiefly and charming personality

( ) That both PMs agree on what to say at the UN

( ) They became good mates and friends

( ) Ratu Mara was courteous, formal and well mannered

( ) Ratu Mara was able to change Indira Gandhi's attitude and policy

( ) The Indian PM was surprised that an iTaukei leader could be so impressive

4 Now use that choice as a theme for an imaginary newspaper report for the *Fiji Times* on Mara's meeting with Indira Gandhi. Also use the phrase "deep impression". (100 words)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5 THE AGREEMENT FOR AN INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION

The private discussions between Ratu Mara and A.D. Patel opened the way to confidential talks in Suva involving several leaders from the two major political parties. The policy they agreed on was the foundation for the constitutional conference in London early in 1970 which led to the formulation of the constitution for Fiji's independence.

During 1969, British officials feared they would have to agree to an iTaukei demand for a constitution that entrenched iTaukei political domination. This demand by iTaukei had been voiced since the crisis following the 1968 by-elections. But India's cooperation with Fiji and with Britain in the 1960s had always been unstable as India worried that the outcome of Fiji's decolonisation would leave Indians as second class citizens. If Britain **acquiesced** in the iTaukei nationalist aspiration, India would feel it had been deliberately deceived in its friendship and discussions with Britain. This event would have other flow-on and damaging consequences for its relationship with Britain. So the British planned to "cool" their relations with India and not aggressively push for immediate independence on the Fiji question.

In Fiji a series of remarkable agreements were reached among Fiji's political leaders and this resolved the issue and let the British "off the hook". The iTaukei were to have only a limited political privilege: a veto power for the Great Council of Chiefs in an upper house of parliament on legislative proposals specifically concerning iTaukei interests.

The major factor that enabled agreement between the political parties was the National Federation Party's (NFP) willingness to defer a decision on the common franchise question (initially until several years after independence but the NFP did not strongly push for the common franchise again). In addition, it was the NFP that first proposed the Council of Chiefs should have a veto power and it was the NFP leaders who proposed that Fiji move to independence under Ratu Mara's leadership.

India voiced no objection to the new constitution. Early in 1970, Ratu Mara and the new NFP leader Siddiq Koya addressed the United Nations General Assembly together to explain the constitution and how it was achieved. In October 1970, Fiji was admitted as a member to the UN.

In January 1971, Ratu Mara as Prime Minister and Siddiq Koya as Leader of the Opposition visited New Delhi together. In his response to Indira Gandhi's welcome, Mara acknowledged India's contribution to the difficult project of Fiji's decolonisation.

He said in reply to Mrs Gandhi, "If our passage towards independence has been smooth and a happy one, no less credit should be given to you and your people and your ministers who have come to help us."

ACTIVITY 4 AGREEING ON THE CONSTITUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

1 Who were the three key leaders in Fiji during the lead-up to independence?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

2 What was the new name of the Federation party?

_____

3 What was India's main worry about the constitution?

_____

_____

4 What does "second class citizen" mean? Explain in your own words.

_____

_____

5 What does the phrase "nationalist aspiration" mean"? Choose one of the following suggested meanings;

( ) Supporting dreams and ideas for your nation or country
( ) Putting your own nation or country before all other proposals, plans and policies
( ) One group within a nation wanting special privileges
( ) One group claiming to speak for the whole nation (even though they may be only a fraction of the population)

5 Now use that choice as a theme for an imaginary speech by a visiting journalist to the UN in 1969 on Fiji's progress towards independence (100 words)

_____

_____

_____

_____

6 PRIME MINISTERIAL VISITS; 1981 AND 2005

Indira Ghandi, then the Prime Minister of India, visited Fiji in 1981. A Prime Ministerial visit is a significant event in the relationship between two nations. However, her visit must be seen in relation to other visits. For example, it was another 23 years before the Minister of State for Overseas Indian Affairs, a senior member of Cabinet, visited Fiji in November 2004. This was the first Ministerial visit from India after 23 years. So we should look carefully at Indira Ghandi's visit and its motives and purposes, and then ask why there was such a long blank spot in relations between 1981 and 2004.

The gap between 1981 and 2004 can be explained by the two coups in 1987 and subsequent events. The military coups strained the India – Fiji relationship. The High Commissioner of India, Shri TP Srinivasan was asked to leave Fiji in October, 1989 and the Indian High Commission was closed and the Indian Cultural Centre closed on May 24, 1990. It was not until a new constitution of Fiji was introduced in July, 1997 that Fiji was able to re-enter the British Commonwealth (on October 1, 1997). Fiji was suspended from the Commonwealth again after the attempted coup and hostage crisis in May-June 2000.

Under a photograph of Mrs Ghandi greeting elderly citizens, the *Girmit Council of Fiji* website describes the visit of Mrs Indira Ghandi in the following statement:



> *The Fiji Girmit Council was very successful in raising funds to build the Girmit Centre at Lautoka. The Fundraising drive was launched by Ratu Sir Kamesese Mara. The Fiji Government under Prime Ministership, gave the Council 12.5 acres of prime land at Lautoka, $150,000.00 in cash. Ratu Mara was also instrumental in inviting Mrs. Indira Gandhi to visit Fiji and while in Fiji she opened the first stage of the Girmit Centre. While opening the Centre Mrs. Gandhi donated a sum of $50,000.00.*
>
> *Source:* http://www.fijigirmit.org/fgc/opening.htm

As a part of India's 'Look East Policy', India became a dialogue partnership with ASEAN (Association of South east Asian nations) and India then became a dialogue partner of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). India-Fiji bilateral relations have grown steadily in recent years due to several initiatives and bilateral visits to and from Fiji. Fiji established a High Commission in India in January 2004.

In 2004, PM Laiseni Qarase visited India to open the new Fijian High Commission. His speech included the following comment;

> *We are taking our diplomatic relations to higher levels, after all these years, and India has a key position in modernising the very enterprise which created the first bonds between us. Both our nations are now ready to cross the threshold of a fresh era of co-operation and friendship. We have always seen India as a world leader and a voice for developing countries. India provided leadership for the political awakening of many former colonies. There was an inevitability about this, given India's size, location and its long struggle for freedom. It stood at the forefront of non-alignment during the Cold War, and was instrumental in the reshaping and virtual rebirth of the Commonwealth.*
> *Much effort has gone into preparing for this day and for the new era in India-Fiji relations.*
>
> *I offer sincere thanks to the officials from both Governments who have done the groundwork and to our High Commissioner, His Excellency Luke Rokovada, and his staff for their efforts.*
>
> *We particularly appreciate the role of India's High Commissioner in Fiji, His Excellency, Ajay Singh. Ajay brings to his job a deep understanding of Fiji and its people. Our country is in his blood. His father was a former High Commissioner to Fiji and his paternal great-grand parents were among the arrivals from India at the end of the Nineteenth Century. He is married to a local girl, Shiromani, whose family can also be listed in the roll of honour of our leading citizens and community leaders. Before they left India to take up their diplomatic posting, Shiromani had to make a very important choice. She had to give up her Fiji passport. It was, I understand, a very emotional decision for her. It was like giving up the part of her that was Fiji, to become a full part of India. In a very personal sense, Ajay and Shiromani represent what is unique and special about Fiji's and India's relationship with each other.*
>
> *Through our common history and cultural connections, we have bonds that are enduring and permanent. In other words, we are forever and irrevocably part of one another.*

High Commissioner Luke Rokovada arrived in New Delhi and presented his credentials on 7th May, 2004. In October 2005, four Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) and Agreements on cooperation between India and Fiji in health, tourism, IT and joint trade committees were signed during the visit. Visits back and forward between India and Fiji, by Prime Ministers, senior government officials and bureaucrats have continued. The following is a select list just for some of these visits to India between 2006 and 2013.

FIJI'S OFFICIAL VISITS TO INDIA; A SELECT LIST 2006-2013

- Minister of Foreign Affairs & External Trade along with a trade delegation in Oct 2006,
- Mahendra Chaudhry, Minister for Finance, National Planning & Sugar Reforms, May 2007
- Acting Chief Justice of Fiji Anthony Gates visited in May 2007.
- Commissioner of Police Mr. Teleni visited India in June 2008.
- Mahendra Pal Chaudhry, Minister for Finance, National Planning and Sugar Industry and Public Utilities visited India in April 2008.
- PM Commodore Bainimarama paid two private visits to India in February 2008 and March 2009.
- Minister of Works,Transport and Public Utilities Mr. Timoci Natuva visited in Oct 2010
- Attorney General and Communications Minister Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and Telecommunication Authority of Fiji Chairperson Mere Vuniwaqa visited Hyderabad in May 2010 to attend the 5th World Telecommunications Development Conference.
- Attorney General and Minister for Tourism Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum led a tourism delegation from Fiji to Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai in February 2011.
- Chief Justice Mr. Anthony Gates visited Mumbai and New Delhi, 11 to 17 December 2010 and held meetings with the Minister of Law and Justice, Chief Justice of India and other officials.
- Commander Francis B. Kean, Chief of the Navy of Fiji attended the HYDROIND 2011 - International Seminar and Exhibition on Hydrology held in New Delhi on 3-4 March 2011.
  Source: http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Fiji-January-2012.pdf

In a major diplomatic visit, on November 19, 2014, the Indian PM, Mr Modi, visited Fiji and three MOA's were signed. Diplomatic visits are usually made more meaningful by the signing of treaties and MOAs.

1 The MoU between Foreign Service Institute of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Fiji will promote cooperation in mutually beneficial areas of activity, which includes: a) Exchange of information on structure and content of training programs for diplomats b) Identification of experts in mutually agreed areas. The MOU will foster closer exchanges between India and Fiji, as well as the Pacific region.

2 The MoU confirms the earmarking of plots of land in New Delhi and Suva for the construction of the respective Missions/Cultural Centre/Residences of the High Commissions of Fiji in India and of the High Commission of India in Fiji. This will provide a permanent location for the conduct of our relations and will be an iconic presence in Suva.

3 The MoU is the provision of $70m LOC to Fiji for the establishment of a co-generation power plant at Rarawai Sugar Mills. This will expand the scope of bilateral cooperation in the sugar sector by enhancing value addition and addressing climate change concerns. India had earlier provided assistance for up -gradation and product development at three of Fiji's major sugar mills

Source:
http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/24281/MOUs_signed_between_India_and_Fiji_during_the_visit_of_Prime_Minister_to_Fiji

4 QUESTIONS ON MINISTERIAL VISITS.

1. Why was there such a long break in visits (between 1981 and 2004)?

_____

_____

_____

2. PM Qarase claimed Fiji and India had permanent bonds and that they are “irrevocably and forever part of one another”. Do you agree?

( ) YES
( ) NO

3. Now explain your choice – in 100 words explain why this is true, not true, or partially accurate

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
_____.

4. Why did PM Qarase identify specific people, Mr and Mrs Shiromani and Ajah Singh, in his speech in India in 2004?

_____

_____

_____

_____

CONCLUSION: A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP?

This summary uses a question mark in the sub-title – a close relationship?

The question mark, or doubt about the closeness of the relationship between Fiji and India occurs because India is not a Pacific Ocean neighbour, nor a major aid donor to Fiji and for many years had an anti-Fiji policy on the coups and military take-overs of Fiji. India is also a super-power, has one billion+ people and has Asian heritage while Fiji is small – very small. The relationship with India was not 'colonial'. But Like India, Fiji was once a colony of Britain, and after independence in 1970, Fiji did establish formal diplomatic relations with India and both India and Fiji were a part of the British Empire, and later the Commonwealth, and many Fijians are of South Asia descent.

The historian Ron Crocombe noted that India's political relationship with Fiji was not a topic of interest. (R Crocombe, *The South Pacific*, Suva, 2001, fn 14, p.654). For example, the historian Ahmed Ali in *Plantation to politics: studies on Fiji Indians*, does not refer to any Fiji-India political or diplomatic links and Brij Lal, in his history of the 20th century in Fiji, *Broken waves* only discusses girmit (indentured labour) and the controversial pre-independence topic of Indian enlistment in WWI and WWII, (Lal, *Broken waves*, p.120-25) but no other links.

Indian governments and politicians had occasionally expressed a desire, before and after Fiji's independence, to look after and work with Indians overseas. But the historian, Ken Gillion, concluded that "by 1927 India had lost the battle for a major say in the affairs of Indians overseas" (K Gillion, *The Fiji Indians,* Canberra 1977, p.98). 1927 was less than a decade after Indian indenture overseas ended.

In 1950-1951 the anthropologist, Adrian Mayer, conducted fieldwork among Fiji's Indian community. He concluded that even the visits of Indian politicians to Fiji were not events of any great interest. One group of politicians visited briefly in 1951 urging Indians to become activists. Mayer reported that Indians in Fiji felt "that outsiders should not have told Fijian Indians how to manage their affairs after such a short stay". (A Mayer, *Indians in Fiji,* London 1963, p.188) Mayer concluded "India was not a centre of Fiji Indian interest". (Mayer p.190)

Now, according to 'official' statements by both governments, as we saw in the introduction, the opposite is true, and both governments claim that there has been a long and friendly relationship. It remains the task of historians to interpret the evidence around these events and provide an objective view of the relationship.

GLOSSARY

Acquiesced	To reluctantly agree, to say "yes" even if it is against your policy
Aid	Monies given by donor nations to help neighbours and less wealthy nations
Big Brother	Usually meaning Australia as a rich and powerful neighbour
Colonial	a relationship between a colonial ruler and its colony
Common Franchise	A single roll of voters, all voting equally
Conciliatory	Meaning seeking agreement and compromise
Decolonisation	Gaining independence from a colonial power
Descent	Meaning to come from, to follow your descendants.
Diplomacy	(i) The skill of making the correct decision in foreign policy (ii) The formal and informal meetings between nations
Empire	(i) A world-wide network of colonies (ii) Refers also to Loyalty or opposition to Britain
Global South	A group of developing new nations, former colonies, but not superpowers
Humanitarian	Aid given to help less fortunate nations
Independence	The action of re-gaining the rule of your own nation
Migration	Social and personal links; A major form of relationships between nations
Moderate	To adopt a middle approach, (see conciliatory)
Neo-colonial	a relationship between a large nation and a smaller former colony
NMA	Non-Aligned Movement; a group of nations not supporting either of the opposing sides in the Cold War (USA and USSR)
Policy	A statement by a nation about how it will treat another nation, or act in global events
Propaganda	Deliberate positive publicity that puts forward a good image
Race	Distinguishing between people on the basis of skin colour, heritage or ethnicity.
Regionalism	The idea that Pacific island nations could have a strong voice and improved Social and Economic futures if they worked together in a single regional organization.
Trade	Economic links; A major form of relationships between nations

END OF UNIT ESSAY QUESTIONS

- What happened between 1945-1970 in Fiji's relationship with India??
- What are the post-1970 links between Fiji and India?

TYPICAL SHORT EXAM QUESTIONS

- What convinced India to change policy in 1967-69?
- Why were there no PM visits between 1981 and 2005?
- Fiji has a long friendly relationship with India – agree or disagree with this statement. Your answer should cover the period from 1970 to 2000.

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

- Start a scrap book of newspaper articles on visits to India, or visits to Fiji, or other links between India and Fiji.
- Go the websites of the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
    - Look for websites on "India-Fiji relations".
        - http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Fiji-January-2012.pdf
        - http://www.whatisindia.com/issues/fijirela/indo-fijirela_info.html
- Go the websites for Fiji
    - www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj
    - www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=8771
- Check the websites of newspapers under "Foreign News"

RESOURCES

Ahmed Ali, *Plantation to politics: studies on Fiji Indians*, Suva 1980
Ron Crocombe, *The South Pacific*, Suva, 2001
Ken Gillion, *Fiji Indian Migrants; a history to the end of indenture in 1920,* Canberra 1962
Ken Gillion, *The Fiji Indians; challenge to European dominance 1920-1946, Canberra, 1977*
Government of Fiji, *Girmit; a centenary anthology 1879-1979,* Suva, 1979
Brij Lal, *Broken waves*, Honolulu, 1992
Brij Lal, ed., *Bittersweet; the Indo-Fijian experience,* Canberra 2004
Adrian Mayer, *Indians in Fiji,* London 1963
Vijay Mishra, ed., *Rama's banishment; a centenary tribute to the Fiji Indians 1879-1979,* Auckland 1979
Doug Munro, "In the wake of Leonidas; reflections on Indo-Fijian indenture historiography, *Journal of Pacific Studies,* 28, No 1, 2005, p.93-117.
Robert Norton, *Race and politics in Fiji,* Brisbane 1977
Ramesh Thakur, "India and Overseas Indians: the case of Fiji", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1985, p. 356-370

CHECKLIST

Answer yes or No.

1. Are you able to describe Fiji's links with India?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Are you able to define the phrase "in the nation's interest" ?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Can you identify the value of politicians visiting each other's nation?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Could you distinguish between private sector and government links?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Are you able to describe the difference between pre-1970 and post-1970 Fiji relationship with India?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have checked **yes** for all these questions, you may proceed to the next Unit. If not, go back and revise what you have studied.