

# Forced Labour & Migration: Indentured & Pacific Labour Trades

## An International Conference

15-17 July 2019, Lautoka, Fiji.

### Introduction:

'Forced Labour' has played a critical role in the development trajectories of numerous nations. Historically, forced labour goes back to the earliest of human civilisations. Texts from the past, including religious texts of all major faiths make references to 'forced labour'. The mention of forced labour and condemnation of its use can even be found in Hinduism, one of the world's oldest religions, whose religious texts, the Vedas date from 1500 to 1200 BC.

While forced labour has occurred throughout the world, and in various historical periods, there have been more recent episodes of forced labour in the form of African slavery, South Pacific labour trade, and Chinese and Indian indenture. Scholarship into African slavery is well established; however, the South Pacific labour trade and Indian indenture have until recently remained relatively under-explored areas of research.

Recently, through its *Slave and Indenture Route Projects*, UNESCO has paid homage to the dislocation of these individuals and families through forced labour and the lasting impacts of the process on millions around the world today. The global events, spanning almost 400 years, saw the monumental dislocation of an estimated 15 million people from Africa, India, China and Melanesia. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database shows 12.5 million Africans were shipped to the New World between 1525 and 1866, about 1.2 million Indians were taken out of India between 1834 and 1920 for manual labour in the Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific, and thousands of Pacific Island workers were moved across the Pacific, turning essentially into unfree labour.

Environmental upheavals also forced hundreds of thousands of people into forced labour. More recently, this has resonance with present day South Pacific citizens, who are experiencing the detrimental consequences of rapid climate change. Given the connections between forced labour and the displacement of people due to environmental factors, such as rising sea levels, erosion of homelands, hurricanes, earthquakes and droughts, forced labour and migration is a crucial human rights concern for the South Pacific region today. Present day global conflicts as well as extreme inequalities also seems to be resulting in human trafficking, which results, inter alia, in forced labour.

This trans-disciplinary conference will focus on two forms of post-slavery forced labour: Pacific Labour trade (Blackbirding), and the Indian Indenture system. The conference aims to bring together national and international scholars and social justice activists to share research insights on various aspects of post-slavery forced labour.

**Objective:** The primary objective of the conference is to facilitate discourse on all aspects related to indenture labour and Pacific labour trades, with specific focus on the creation of contemporary societies in countries impacted by these trades. The conference aims to create a

dialogue between scholars from different disciplines:

- To explore the connections between displacement of people through Pacific and Indian labour migrations, and their significance for the present day
- To explore the connections between political, social, economic and environmental distresses and displacement of people through Pacific and Indian labour migrations, and their significance for the present day
- To provide an interdisciplinary forum to discuss the influences behind forced labour trade
- To provide an interdisciplinary forum to find solutions to forced labour as a humanitarian crisis
- To strengthen global efforts to end forced labour in the present day.

## **Core Theme: Pacific and Asian Indenture Labour Trades: Past, Present and Future**

### **Suggested Topics for Papers:**

- ***History and Legacy of Forced Labour migration***
  - Sources of Forced Labour & Hosts of Forced Labour - then and now.
  - Environmental Push Factors versus Economic Pull Factors in the History and Legacy of Forced Labour migration.
  - Shaping of the social, cultural, economic and political fabric of the nations due to force labour trade.
  - Twice/Thrice Banished.
- ***Memory and Representation of Forced Labour Migration***
  - Construction of identities.
  - Collective memory of the diasporic communities of their current and imagined homelands.
  - Contribution of permanent displacement and relocation of people to identity formation of the diasporic communities of today.
  - Construction of 'Home' for the displaced.
  - Recalling of historical dislocation and relocation remembered through collective memory of a nation.
  - Religions, spirituality and their perpetuation and identity formation.
  - Forced Labour in Literature and Popular Culture etc
  - Art, Drama, Film, Music
  - ***Special Event: Writers Discourse:*** a one-day forum on the theme '***Representation of Dislocation in Fijian, Caribbean and African Literature***'.
- ***The Political Economy of Forced Labour Migration***
  - Forced Labour & Economy.
  - Violence of Forced Labour.
  - Resistance.
  - Gender Dimensions.
  - Labour exploitation, migration and women migrants' agency.
  - Law, Politics.
- ***Science, Technology & Sustainable Development***
  - Health, & Medicine.
  - Mental and physical health.

- Traditional medicine, and culinary practices.
- Comparative analysis of health in the diaspora.
- **Special Events: Panels/Sessions**
  - Will Climate Change induced Migration create the New International Era of Forced Labour?
  - Human Trafficking and Forced Labour
  - Film, Art, Drama

## Presentation Format

- Posters
- Full Presentation sessions (length: 15 mins)
- Student presentation sessions (length: 10 mins)
- Lunchtime lightening sessions (length: 5 mins)
- Films - Screened parallelly.
- Art - displayed in conference gallery
- Drama - performances in evenings.

For academic papers: Preference is for papers to be circulated to participants on the first day of the Conference, and presentations to be largely interactive.

**Language:** English.

**Who Should Attend?:** All researchers, writers and activists whose interest is forced labour, Pacific Labour Trade (Blackbirding), Girit, and other Asian labour trades.

## Academic Paper Submission

**Abstract details:** Word limit for abstracts - no more than 300 words, including keywords. Abstracts must include the proposed title of the paper, author full name(s), address(es) and email address(es) of all authors. Authors are encouraged to indicate the session in which they wish their paper to be placed. The final decision on paper placement shall be that of the Conference Convener.

**File type:** Word for Windows.

**Full paper:** This is required for papers whose abstracts are accepted. Selected papers shall be published in our journals *Fijian Studies: A Journal of Contemporary Fiji*, *Pacific Journal of Education*, or *Papers on Indenture*. There is no word limit for the papers, but papers must be of publishable standard. Those not able to submit full papers, but whose abstracts have been accepted can still make presentations at the conference as long as they are registered; these authors will need to make their own arrangements for copying and circulating their speaking notes, ppts or completed papers.

**Abstract and Paper Reviews:** A selection panel shall assess all abstracts received and advise authors of the outcomes. The key criteria would be relevance to the theme of the Conference. All final papers shall be blind reviewed to ensure standards.

**Submission Address:** [fiji.conference2019@gmail.com](mailto:fiji.conference2019@gmail.com)

## Film, Art, Drama Proposal Submission

**Proposal details:** Submitters should provide an abstract of the activity they propose in no more than 300 words. Details to be included are: (a) creator (s); (b) copyrights, (c) censor details (if films), (d) formats, and (e) equipment, etc., requirements if accepted for the conference.

## Important Dates:

The following are the critical dates (these are the last dates; earlier submission is preferred):

1. Submission of Abstract: 31 March 2019
2. Notification of acceptance: 2 weeks from submission
3. Full paper submission: 30 June 2019
4. Early Registration: 30 June 2019
5. Late Registration: 15 July 2019
6. Daily Registration: 15 July, 16 July, 17 July

## Social Events

Conference Dinner: 15 July 2019  
Networking Dinner: 16 July 2019  
Closing Dinner: 17 July 2019  
Excursions/Sports: 14 July / 18 July 2019.

## Registration Fee:

- Pacific Island, Giritiya Country Residents/India/Third World Residents: \$F50 (USD25)
- Other Residents: \$F200 (USD100)
- Students, Unemployed, Retired: \$F5 per day
- Observers from Pacific Island, Third World Residents: \$F50
- Observers First World Residents: \$F100
- Day Rates: \$F40 (excludes dinners and transfers)
- All participants must register.

*[\* Full Registration Fee allows for conference materials, session fees, cocktail, and all teas and dinners. (The rates are subsidised by sponsors). Separate charges for excursions would be levied. Details to be announced soon.]*

## Logistics

The conference city, Lautoka, is located 20 minutes drive from the Nadi International Airport. There are two international airports in Fiji: Nadi and Nausori. Lautoka is approximately a 4-hour drive from Nausori airport; domestic flights also run a number of times daily between these two airports.

## Travel

Fiji is well serviced with international flights. Airlines which fly to Fiji include: Aircalin, Air Kiribati, Air New Zealand, Air Vanuatu, Jetstar, Korean Air, Virgin Australia, Fiji Airways, Qantas, Air Niugini, Solomon Airlines, United Airlines (code share with Air New Zealand). There are multiple flights a day from Australia, New Zealand and the US. Fiji Airways also flies to Singapore and Hongkong. Korean Airlines flies to Fiji from Seoul twice a week. Air Niugini, Vanuatu Air and Solomon Airlines fly to Fiji from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Other countries in the Pacific are serviced by Fiji Airways and a number of regional airlines.

## Conference Committee

**Conference Convener:** Dr. Ganesh Chand, Global Girit Institute (GGI)

**Conference Organising Secretary:** Dr. Farzana Gounder, IPU, New Zealand.

**Conference Deputy Organising Secretary:** Ms. Manpreet Kaur, Associate, GGI

## Conference Advisory Committee

Dr. Amba Pande, JNU, India.

Professor Biman C. Prasad, Parliament of Fiji

Professor Brij V. Lal, Emeritus Professor, ANU

Dr. Doug Munro, Queensland University, Australia

Professor Dharmendra Sharma, University of Canberra, Australia

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Professor Maurits Hassankhan, University of Suriname

Mr. Nadesa Goundar, Unitec, Auckland, New Zealand

Professor Nii-K Plange, Fiji National University

Professor Prem Misir, Guyana /USA

Mr. Ravi Dev, Guyana

Dr. Surendra B. Prasad, Australia

Professor Satish Chand, School of Business, UNSW Canberra, Australia

Professor Shaista Shameem, University of Fiji

Professor Subramani, University of Fiji, Lautoka.

Dr. Vishnu Bisram, New York

Professor Vijay Naidu, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

**Primary Sponsor Institutions:** Global Girit Institute, Saweni Shopping Centre, Queens Road, Lautoka, & Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, 14 Vesi Crescent, Lautoka.

## Conference Contact Details:

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