

Fijian Studies

A Journal of Contemporary Fiji

Vol. 15 No. 1 **Special Commemorative Issue: *Girmit*** March 2017

Articles

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----|
| Fiji: Absent-Present and Vice Versa | Brij V. Lal | 3 |
| From Indian <i>Coolies</i> to Fijians: Culture and Identity Change among Indo-Fijians | Vijay Naidu | 11 |
| Indentured Labour Migration and the Making of an Indian Diaspora in South Africa, 1860-1911 | Goolam Vahed | 27 |
| Restorying <i>Girmit</i> : Commemorative Journalism, Collective Consciousness and the Imagined Community | Farzana Gounder | 47 |
| Whose Story is it? Colonialism, <i>Syria</i> Ship Wreck, and Texting Race Relations in Fiji | Ganesh Chand | 63 |
| <i>In Search of 'The Children of the Wind.'</i>
A Journey to Chattisgarh | Brij V. Lal | 93 |
| <i>Girmitiyas'</i> Health: Review, 2017 | Neil Sharma | 109 |

Dialogue: Writers Forum

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Charles Freer Andrews (12 February 1871 – 5 April 1940): The Abolition of Indenture, A Centennial Essay | Satendra Nandan | 123 |
| Home, Migration and New Identities: Some Reflections | Manpreet Kaur
Sanjaleen Prasad | 145 |

Restorying Girit: Commemorative Journalism, Collective Consciousness and the Imagined Community

Farzana Gounder

Abstract

This article analyses the construction of a community's master narrative and its performance as a narrative of the nation. The narrative was about the founding members of the Fiji Indian community and was performed in Fiji Hindi, in the public sphere of an anniversary journalism programme, Girit Gāthā, commemorating the centennial anniversary of Indian arrival to Fiji. The article argues that through its framing, the narrative reconstructs the community's collective memory of indenture, which challenges the academic fragmentation of indenture process and labour. The narrative's framing redefines the boundaries of community and establishes a sense of common history to unite the Indians across genders, ethnicities, languages, cultures and religions. This construction of a pan Fiji Indian history is tied to the construction of an imagined Fiji Indian community, nationalism and political identity.

Introduction

Indian indenture began after the abolishment of the slave trade to meet the demands of labour shortage on the colonial plantations. The system lasted 37 years for Fiji, beginning on 4 March 1879 and ending with the indenture system's abolishment in 1920. In that period, 87 voyages were made to Fiji, and 60,965 Indians voyaged from India to work in Fiji. The majority of the labourers worked on the Australian Colonial Sugar Refining Company's (CSR) sugar plantations. Others worked on copra or rice plantations, or were employed by the colonial government to build roads and railway lines. On completion of their indenture, sixty per cent of these labourers, chose to settle in Fiji (Lal, 2004).

In the 1970s, almost a hundred years after the first labourers arrived in Fiji, Fiji Indians were becoming vocal in their quest for a national and

political identity (Ali, 1980; Gillion, 1977). However, the descendants of the labourers were also beginning to fracture not only along the ethnic divides of North and South Indians, but also along religious lines of Muslims and Hindus, with further schisms arising within each religion (Ali, 1978; 1981; Kelly, 1991). It was in this atmosphere that *Girit Gāthā*, which translates as 'Stories of Indenture', was produced, as part of the centennial celebrations to mark Indian arrival to Fiji.

The program was first broadcast in 1979 on Radio Fiji 2, which at the time was the only Hindi radio station in Fiji (Usher & Leonard, 1979). *Girit Gāthā* was played weekly at half past eight on Tuesday nights and had a thirty-minute time slot. The commemorative radio documentary involved the reconstruction of the lives of Indians, who, between 1879 and 1916, had voyaged from Colonial India to Fiji under the system of Indian indenture. Since its inaugural broadcast, *Girit Gāthā* has been replayed annually to mark the anniversary of the arrival of the first indentured labourers to Fiji. The near non-existence of indenture-era photos, letters and other memorabilia in Fiji makes *Girit Gāthā*, the collection of these labourers' oral narratives, a crucial cornerstone of the community's cultural memory of indenture (Gounder, 2011).

This study analyses the radio announcer, Tej Ram Prem's opening narrative on *Girit Gāthā*. I consider the narrative construction within the genre of commemorative journalism and the narrative's hearing within its cultural and temporal space. I suggest that the narrative serves as a master narrative for the Fiji Indian community. Through its framing and annual broadcast over the last 38 years, the narrative continually represents girit and challenges the academic fragmentation of indenture process and labour. The narrative's framing redefines the boundaries of community and establishes a sense of common history to unite the Indians of Fiji. In this study I argue that the construction of a pan Fiji Indian history through the collective memory of indenture is tied to nationalism and political identity.

Commemorative Journalism

The genre of commemorative journalism is a realm of overlap between the journalist's news reporting and the historian's record-keeping. Commemorative journalism is media's tribute to historical events, depicted as having significantly impacted the course of the nation and the narrativized remembrance of these events is a production of national memorialization (Edy, 1999; Kitch, 2002).

Commemorative journalism uses media framing to set the tone of

the narrative and also create narrative coherence. Through a process of selective emphasis and omission, media takes multi-layered events, such as girit, and anchors these events within the audience's underlying schemas (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The frame from which media narrates an event is demonstrated through its selective emphasis on actions and experiences, creating temporal and thematic coherence, which enchains disparate events into a logical narrative. Importantly, the choice of frame influences the manner in which the audience defines who are the protagonists and antagonists, and whether the event's outcomes and experiences are morally acceptable.

Through the boundaries established within the narrative, commemorative journalism reimagines the boundaries of who belongs within a community (Rosie, MacInnes, Petersoo, Condor & Kennedy, 2004). How we perceive ourselves and differentiate 'us' from 'them' is negotiated through the narratives with which we, as a cultural group, identify ourselves. These culturally produced master narratives, which consist of generalizations, beliefs and suppositions of how the world should be, form the ideological frame within which we negotiate our (un)sanctioned individual life narratives (Bamberg, 2004). To achieve this function of demarcating 'us' from 'them', master narratives impose generalizations, simplify complexities, and collapse differences. Through the process, master narratives legitimise power relations, cultural knowledge, mores and norms.

Commemorative journalism, through selective remembering (and forgetting), is at the heart of national memorialization, collective identity construction and nation building (Olick & Robbins, 1998). The power of these master narratives is best described by Said: 'Such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe' (1978: 94). This is especially the case when the narrative is replayed on a regular basis for decades, as the case of *Girit Gāthā*, because it provides the audience with a persistent frame for organizing their personal narratives. Importantly, these 'electronic monuments' of history can counter the academic/professional master narratives of historians and sociologists (Dayan & Katz, 1994).

A nation's collective memory is dynamic, an ongoing negotiation between the master narratives and the personal narratives of individuals who belong to the imagined community. Master narratives maintain their authoritative position because a large proportion of the speech community subscribes to them; however, master narratives are contestable, as seen through the examples of feminist discourse on indenture (Shameem, 1987). Hence, master narratives need to be able to adjust and adapt to

changing perspectives of the speech community, because if they are not adaptable, they will be replaced with other master narratives, more in line with the community's current values, as demonstrated in the evolution of Fiji's indenture master narratives.

The Master Narratives of Indenture

Fiji's conceptualizations of the Indian indenture process and the indentured labourers has evolved over time.¹ The narrative began as a sad tale of humiliation, pain and suffering on the part of the labourers, who were perceived as 'poor stock' from India. The current master narratives oppose this rendition. The indenture narratives of today do not deny the harshness of the plantation environment; however, the tales' locus has shifted from that of victimization and ignorance to a tale which emphasizes the labourers' agency.

During indenture, the colonial master narrative was dominant. The narrative painted indenture as an opportunity for the labourers to escape India's oppression, inequality and destitution. In this narrative, the labourers were emphatically portrayed as being from the lowest rungs of society and from parts of India most severely affected by famine and poverty. Indenture was, therefore, an opportunity for the labourers to find a better life. However, the counter narratives of the time, heard from those who had laboured under the system, presented indenture as a dehumanizing and degrading experience marked by exploitation, violence and death. In the 1900s, the labourers' narratives, such as Totaram Sanadhya and Benarsidas Chaturvedi's (1973/1914) *Fiji Dwip Men Mere Ikkis Varsh (My twenty one years in the Fiji Islands)*², were taken into the wider public arena of the anti-indenture campaign and contributed to the abolishment of Indian indenture in 1920 (Andrews & Pearson, 1918).

The themes of racial discrimination and the fragmentation of cultural mores evidenced in the labourers' narratives became the dominant narrative of the 1970s, and was reiterated and amplified through academic indentureship writings. The academic master narratives of this decade were about the (im)moralization of indenture. Tinker (1974) and Ali (1979) painted girit as another name for slavery and regularized racism

¹ This overview is based solely on Fiji's indenture master narratives. A recent detailed analysis of master narratives of indenture in the wider diaspora is Lal (2015).

² Sanadhya's partial narrative, which portrays the collapse of Indian cultural values on the plantations and the institutionalized exploitation of the labourers was first published in 1914. The remainder of the narrative can be found in Sanadhya (2012).

of the powerful colonizers over the powerless, dislocated colonized. The duplicity of the *arkatis* (recruiters) was emphasized in getting the labourers on board the indenture ships to Fiji. And the labourers were portrayed as being ignorant of the spatial and temporal dislocation from India and the realities of the harshness of the plantation environment. Girit plantations, according to these master narratives, were a brutal *narak* (hell) where violence, murder and suicide were the norm. Naidu (1980) continued the indenture narrative in a similar vein, however, his discourse also exposed the ethnic tensions between the dominant North and the minority South Indians on the plantations, where, according to Naidu, the South Indians suffered the brunt of indenture's hardships, as evidenced in their high suicide rates.

The current master narratives identify challenges to the moral discourse of the 1970s. For instance, in the emphatic discussions on the collapse of cultural values and customs on the plantations, indentured women were portrayed as being manipulative agents without maternal instincts (cf. Lal, 1985) and as victims of brutality (Sanadhya, 1973/1914). As a counter narrative, Shameem's (1987) feminist interpretation provides alternative readings of the indentured women's agencies and is part of the wider debate on the women's agentive positions in becoming indentured and negotiating the heavily gendered plantation environment (DeLoughrey, 2011; Lal, 1985; Mishra, 2008).

The current master narratives also focus on the labourers' adaptation to the dislocation from their homeland to create a new culture and language (Siegel, 1992), which marked the beginnings of Fiji Indians. Gounder (2011) is an example of the recent turn in indenture studies to the lived experiences of the labourers. The monograph explores the narratives of the labourers, whose voices are often lost in the official discourse where they are heard about but not heard from. The narratives from the *giritiyas*' lived perspectives opens up the discourse to the diverse experiences, identity and agency claims of the *giritiyas* over 'their' indenture.

As mentioned above, the academic master narratives overwhelmingly dominate the discourse on indenture. *Girit Gāthā*, which was constructed in the public domain of a commemorative radio documentary, provides a counter master narrative to the dominance of such professional narratives. What is of interest is that despite the evolution of the academic master narrative, *Girit Gāthā* persists in the public sphere, annually commemorating Indian arrival to Fiji. The continued presence of *Girit Gāthā* demonstrates its enduring relevance to the Fiji Indian community.

The Narrative Contextualized

Tej Ram Prem's narrative is in three parts.³ Part 1 establishes a causal relationship for the implementation of indenture in Fiji. Part 2 discusses the emotive connotations associated with the term 'indenture'. Part 3 links the protagonists' actions to that of the listeners and emphasizes the relevance of the narrative and the commemorative radio documentary for the audience.

Part 1: Why Indian indenture was introduced to Fiji

In Tej Ram Prem's narrative, Fiji's Indian indenture is triggered by two separate yet interrelated events: the ceding of Fiji to Great Britain in 1874 and the introduction of measles to Fiji in 1875 by a visiting British warship:⁴

Stanza 1: 1874 - Colonialization

das oktobar athārā so chouhatar me fijī ke samanto ne deš ko <u>britan</u> ko samartit kar diya	On 10 th October 1874, Fiji's chiefs ceded the country over to Britain
---	--

Stanza 2: 1875 - Measles epidemic

athāra sou pachhatar me yane <u>ek</u> sāl bād ek aṅrezi larāku jahāz fijī me chechak kī mahamārī le āiyā	In 1875, that is, one year later, an English battleship brought a mea- sles epidemic to Fiji
is bimārī se fijīāns ke sankhā gir kar ek tihāi ho gei	From this epidemic the Fijian population dropped to one third
our goro ko kheto par kām karne wāle majdooro ki sankhiyo achānak edam kam ho gei	And so the number of labourers on the European plantations rapidly decreased

The two events are interrelated in that if Fiji had not been ceded to Great Britain, the warship would probably not have been in Fiji waters, and therefore, the epidemic may not have occurred, or at least, may not have had the same consequences for the Indian labourers:

³ The full transcript of the narrative with its transliteration and translation can be found in the appendix.

⁴ The measles epidemic had dire consequences for the Fijian population. Of the 135,000 indigenous Fijians, approximately 27,000 died during the measles epidemic (Cliff, Haggitt, & Smallman-Raynor, 2000).

Stanza 4: 1879 - Beginnings of Indian indenture

goro ko ārhik stithī sudhārne ke liye	To resolve the Europeans' dire situation
unko kheto me majdoor pradān karne ke liye	And to provide labourers on their plantations
Sir Arthur Gordon ne girmīt ka širī ganeš kiyā jiske phal sarup athārā sou nawāsī me yāne eitīn sevantī nain me Leonidās jahāz se prathām bhartiye majdoor dal fījī utāre gaye	Sir Arthur Gordon gave his blessings to the indenture system, the result of which was seen in 1879 when on the ship Leonidas, the first Indian labourers were dropped off in Fiji

Despite the stress on common origin, the spatial frame of India is marked by its absence, bringing the double consciousness of a hybrid identity, always present, to the fore. The narrative is firmly set in Fiji, signifying a distancing from India, both physically and emotionally. There is no mention of the recruitment process, the wait in the Indian depot for the ship, or even the voyage to Fiji (Lal, 2012; 2004). In Prem's narrative, the first ship 'materializes' in Fiji waters. The focus on Fiji and the lack of focus on India holds a cautionary note for the Fiji Indian community to let go of the skirts of *Bharat Mata*, or 'Mother India', and to start seeing Fiji and not India as the foundation of Fiji Indian history (Pillai, 1978). Thus, it is the inherited experience of indenture and not Indian heritage that marks the boundaries and beginnings of the imagined community.

The final stanza (Stanza 5) in Part 1 also serves as an explanation for the establishment of the Fiji Indian community; however, elaboration on this theme is suspended until the final part of the narrative:

Stanza 5: 1920 - End of Indian indenture

girmīt prathā unīs sou solā me band huī	The indenture era ended in 1920
tathā artīs waršo me, thetī eit waršo me, lagbhag sikstī wan thousand, eksat hazār, bhārtiye šart bandī majdoo fījī lāyegaye	In thirty eight years approximately sixty one thousand contract bound labourers were brought to Fiji
tathā pāch sāl ka girmīt cāt kar adhikansh bhartiye fījī me hī reh gaye	After serving five years of indenture, the majority of Indians stayed back in Fiji

Part 2: The chronicles of indenture

Part 2 uses parallelism in terms of the two Stanzas' structures to contrast affective connotations associated with indenture. The predominant viewpoint of the day, that the indentured labourers were the victims of an unjust and brutal system, can be seen in Stanza 6, which depicts a bleak outlook on indenture, one that is filled with great suffering and little agency on the part of the labourers. Stanza 6 itemises the effects of suffering this hardship, and moves from psychological to physical effects, with the final item 'death' marking the ultimate effect. The tone in Stanza 7 is in sharp contrast to the inagentic tone of Stanza 6 and portrays an image of immense achievement:

Stanza 6: Negative aspects

jahā girmīt ka prayambik itihās šhram yātnā, piṛā, kleš, āsu:, bi-mārī, our mout kī itihās hai	The chronicles of indenture are not only the chronicles of torment, shame, pain, anguish, tears, illness, and death
--	---

Stanza 7: Positive aspects

wahī saṅarš, saṅkalp, dhiṛ nišche ou vije ka <u>bhī</u> itihās hai	But they are also chronicles of resilience, courage, resourcefulness and victory
--	--

Part 3: The labourers and us

The aim of Part 3 is to show similarities between the positive actions of the labourers (Stanza 8) and those of the listeners (Stanza 9). The positive connotations in the final Stanza of Part 2 flow into the first Stanza of Part 3, thereby maintaining cohesion between the two Parts. While Part 2 focuses on the emotive connotations associated with indenture, the labourers are the focus of Part 3, the final section of the narrative.

The two Stanzas in Part 3 are in contrast through the focal characters and time frame. In Stanza 8, Prem uses the phrase 'our forebears' whereas Stanza 9 is about 'their descendants'. Moreover, Stanza 8 is set in the past (*have made*) while Stanza 9 is moving from the present into the future (*today taking the country forwards towards*). The suspended theme of Part 1, the establishment of the Fiji Indian community, is extended and elaborated upon in Part 3. The linkage between 'our fore-

bears' and 'their descendants', is made explicit in this final part of the narrative. That these descendants are the current radio listeners is indicated by a shift in tense from past to present. Hence, Part 3 explains to the listeners how this overview of Indian indenture is relevant for them.

In the final stanza of the narrative (Stanza 8), the narrative emphasizes continuity of shared worldviews over the generations to ground the narrative as a construct of the imagined community (Gadamer, 1975:264). Tej Ram Prem uses parallelism to create a patriotic continuum between the exertions of the labourers and those of their descendants in the advancement of Fiji. This final stanza thus infuses cultural values and norms into what it means to be 'Fiji Indian':

Stanza 8: Extolling the virtues of the labourers

hamāre purwajo ki mehnat masakat, unki qurbānī se jaese fījī deś abād huā	Just as our forebears' hard work and sacrifices have made Fiji fruitful
---	---

Stanza 9: Extolling the virtues of Fiji Indians

waise hī unki santān bhī deś ko āj pragati our vikāś kī wor le jā rahe hai	In that same way, their descendants are today taking the country forward towards development and progress
--	---

Discussion

In 1979, when *Girit Gāthā* was produced as part of the indenture centenary, the moralization of indenture was a dominant frame in the public discourse. The frame was integrated into the Fiji Indians' quest for a national and political identity.

The radio documentary represents and re-presents indenture and the indentured labourers in the public sphere. This is

A discursive space in which strangers discuss issues they perceive to be of consequence for them and their group. Its rhetorical exchanges are the bases for shared awareness of common issues, shared interests, tendencies of extent and strength of difference and agreement, and self-constitution as a public whose opinions bear on the organizations of society (Hauser, 1999: 64).

It is because the narrative under consideration was constructed within the rhetorical public sphere, by a well-respected radio announcer, and was situated around a topic salient within the community that this study considers the narrative to be a master narrative. Being a daily accessible public sphere, the radio and the radio announcers have an important role in the community. Both the content of the radio programs as well as the manner in which opinions are expressed and allowed to be heard on the airwaves set the standard as well as act as a reflection of the community's norms and expectations of behaviour and attitude in a public sphere and the radio announcers can be viewed as the adjudicators of this domain.

The indenture centenary was a literary event with Indian and Fiji Indian poets expressing their point of view, or the Hindi translation of the viewpoint of other prominent Fiji Indians, who had written in English. The poems, which were also broadcast on Radio Fiji 2, were on the themes of the shameful legacy of Indian indenture; the duplicity practiced by the colonial authorities and the recruiters in getting Indians to Fiji; the naivety of the Indians in agreeing to become indentured; and the immense hardship suffered by the labourers at the hands of the plantation authorities. These viewpoints of distinguished members of the community, who, like Prem, focused on describing the labourers in collective terms, represented and also re-presented the viewpoints of the Fiji Indian community. In his narrative, Prem takes this interrelated discourse around the theme 'we are one' and continues it, providing a 'new' perspective, which then enables the discussion to be carried on by the listeners, gaining significance for individuals (cf. Hauser, 1999).⁵

The commemorative radio documentary provides a site for narrativizations of who can be included in the discursive 'us'. To achieve this function of demarcating 'us' from 'them', the master narrative imposes generalizations, simplifies complexities, and collapses differences and through the process, legitimates power relations and cultural knowledge. The discourse of Tej Ram Prem's narrative provides a 'dialogizing intersection' to discuss and debate those incidents that provide a communal 'web of significant meanings, of common actions, celebrations and feelings' (Hauser, 1999: 69).

The narrative creates a convenient beginning for the radio listeners,

⁵In the 1970s, when *Girit Gāthā* was produced, it was the moral overtones that were prominent in academic and public discourse. It is this frame that is reproduced annually through *Girit Gāthā*, substantiating Lal's (2015) argument that the moral discourse on girit remains as the dominant discourse of the community.

as it represents and re-presents the founding members of the community.

In retelling the story of indenture and representing it as the shared experience of 'our' forebears, Tej Ram Prem's narrative acts as a *narrative of the nation* (Hall, 1992: 293), creating a commonality amongst the listeners and creating significance for the listeners in their great grandparents' contribution to the building of the nation. The narrative can therefore be seen as a bid for nationalism amongst the Fiji Indians. This bid for a shared history is reinforced through the context surrounding the production of the narrative: the indenture centenary literary output also focused on the description of the experiences of these labourers in collective terms.

In the 1970s, the community's interest in understanding what had brought their forebears to Fiji ultimately lay in negotiating a cultural identity for Indians born in Fiji. This was a *hybrid identity* (Bhabha, 1994), a fusion of the cultures and languages of the country of origin of their great-grandparents and that of the Fiji Indians' own place of origin, thereby carrying a *double consciousness* (Du Bois, 2009) summed up in the label 'Fiji Indian'. The narrative draws on the commonality of shared memories and language as well as the common heritage of the listeners to unify them as 'one people'. In doing so, it reconceptualises and reappropriates the pan-ethnic identity of the listeners as an internal community construct. Through its continued presence in the public sphere, remembering the first generation of Indians to Fiji, the commemorative journalism continues to delineate the boundaries of the community and continues to serve as a master narrative for Fiji Indians.

Appendix: Full transcript

Part 1: Why Indian indenture was introduced to Fiji

Strophe 1: Factors behind implementation

Stanza 1: The beginning

das oktobar athārā saouchatar me fiji ke samanto ne deško Britain ko samarpit kar diya	On 10 th October 1874, Fiji's chiefs ceded the country over to Britain
--	---

Stanza 2: Measles epidemic

Athāra sau pachhatar me yane ek sāl bād ek aṅrezi larāku jahāz fiji me chechak kī mahamārī le āiyā	In 1875, that is, one year later, an English battleship brought a measles epidemic to Fiji
is bimārī se fijiāns ke sankhīā gir kar ek tihā ho gayi	From this epidemic the Fijian population dropped to one third
our goro ko kheto par kām karne wāle majdooro ki sankhiyo achānak edam kam hogayi	And so the number of labourers on the European plantations rapidly decreased

Stanza 3: Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon

us wakt fiji ke Governor Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon Mauritius ke bhī Governor reh chukhe the	Fiji's Governor at that time, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon had also been the Governor of Mauritius
Tathā bhārtiye majdooro ki himmat aur kaṭ mehnat se khub achhī tarāh prachit bhī the:	And so the Indian labourers' courage and hard work was very familiar to him
unhe ye bhī patā thā kī bhartiye majdooro ko śartbandī yāne agreement jise hamāre purwajo ne girit_kehnā mseamar kar diyā hai	He also knew that the Indian labourers by contract, in other words, 'agreement', which our forebears by the name of 'Girit' have immortalized
nāmak parthā ke tahak kitne āsāni se layā jā saktā hai	With the use of this term, how easily they could be brought to Fiji

Strophe 2: Indian indenture in Fiji*Stanza 4: Beginnings of indenture era*

Goro_ki ārthik stithī sudhārne ke liye	To resolve the Europeans' dire situation
unki kheto me majdoor pradān karne ke liye	And to provide labourers on their plantations
Air Arthur Gordon ne girit ka śirī ganeś kiyā jiske phal swarup athārā sau nawāsī me yāne eitn sevanti nain me Leonidas jahāz se prathām bhartiye majdoor dal fiji utāre gaye	Sir Arthur Gordon gave his blessings to the indenture system, the result of which was seen in 1879 when on the ship Leonidas, the first Indian labourers were dropped off in Fiji

Stanza 5: End of indenture era

Girit prathā unīs sou solā me band huī	The indenture era ended in 1920
tathā artīs waršo me, thetī eit waršo me, lagbhag siktī wan thousand, eksat hazār, bhartiye śart bandī majdoo fiji lāyegaye	In thirty eight years approximately sixty one thousand contract bound labourers were brought to Fiji
tathā pāch sāl ka girit cāt kar adhikansh bhartiye fiji me hī reh gaye	After serving five years of indenture, the majority of Indians stayed back in Fiji

Part 2: The chronicles of indenture**Strophe 3: Reflections***Stanza 6: Negative aspects*

jahā girit ka prayambik ithihās śhram yātnā, piṭā, kleś, āsu:, bi-mārī, our mout kī ithihās hai	The chronicles of indenture are not only the chronicles of torment, shame, pain, anguish, tears, illness, and death
---	---

Stanza 7: Positive aspects

wahī saṅarś, saṅkalp, dhiṭ niśche ou vije ka bhī ithihās hai	But they are also chronicles of resilience, courage, resourcefulness and victory
--	--

Part 3: The labourers and us**Strophe 4: Bridging then and now***Stanza 8: Extolling the virtues of the labourers*

hamāre purwajo ki mehnat masakat, unki qurbānī se jaese fiji deś abād huā	Just as our forebears' hard work and sacrifices have made Fiji fruitful
---	---

Stanza 9: Extolling the virtues of Fiji Indians

waise hī unki santān bhī deś ko āj pragati our vikāś kī wor le jā rahe hai	In that same way, their descendants are today taking the country forward towards development and progress
--	---

References

- Ali, A. (1981). Muslims in Fiji: A brief survey. *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs. Journal*, 3(1), 174-182.
- Ali, A. (1980). *Plantation to politics: Studies on Fiji Indians*. University of the South Pacific: Fiji Times & Herald.
- Ali, A. (1979). Girit: The indenture experience in Fiji. *Bulletin of the Fiji Museum No*, 5.
- Ali, A. (1978). Ethnicity and politics in Fiji. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 14(2), 149-153.
- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso Books.
- Andrews, C. F., & Pearson, W. W. (1918). *Indian indentured labour in Fiji*. Perth, Australia: Colortype Press.
- Bamberg, M. (2004). Talk, small stories, and adolescent identities. *Human Development*, 47(6), 366-369.
- Bhabha, H. K. 1994. *The location of culture*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Cliff, A. D., Haggert, P., & Smallman-Raynor, M. (2000). *Island epidemics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Dayan, D., & Katz, E. (1994). *Media Events: The live broadcasting of history*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- DeLoughrey, E. (2011). On Kala Pani and transoceanic fluids: [Paper in special issue: The Literature of Postcolonial Islands. DeLoughrey, Elizabeth (ed.).]. *New Literatures Review*, (47-48), 71.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 2009. *The souls of black folk*. New York: Library of America.

- Edy, J. A. (1999). Journalistic uses of collective memory. *Journal of Communication*, 49(2), 71-85.
- Gadamer, H-G. 1975. *Truth and method*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gillion, K. L. (1977). *The Fiji Indians: Challenge to European dominance, 1920-1946*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- Gounder, F. (2011). *Indentured identities: Resistance and accommodation in plantation-era Fiji*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (Vol. 2). Sage.
- Hauser, G. 1999. *Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Kelly, J. D. (1991). *A politics of virtue: Hinduism, sexuality, and countercolonial discourse in Fiji*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kitch, C. (2002). Anniversary journalism, collective memory, and the cultural authority to tell the story of the American past. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 36(1), 44-67.
- Lal, Brij V. (2015). Avatars of Fiji's girit narrative. In F. Gounder (Ed.), *Narrative and identity construction in the Pacific Islands* (pp. 177-193). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Lal, B. V. (2012). *Chalo Jahaji: On a journey through indenture in Fiji*. ANU Press.
- Lal, B. V. (2004). *Giritiyas: The origins of the Fiji Indians*. Fiji Institute of Applied Studies.
- Lal, B. V. (1985). Kunti's cry: Indentured women on Fiji plantations. *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 22(1), 55-71.
- Mishra, M. (2008). The Emergence of Feminism in Fiji 1. *Women's History Review*, 17(1), 39-55.
- Naidu, V. (1980). *The violence of indenture in Fiji* (No. 3). Suva: World University Service.
- Olick, J. K., & Robbins, J. (1998). Social memory studies: From "collective memory" to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(1), 105-140.
- Pillai, R. C. (1978). Culture and the Fiji Indian. *Transcript of Radio Fiji Program, In My View*.
- Rosie, M., MacInnes, J., Petersoo, P., Condor, S., & Kennedy, J. (2004). Nation speaking unto nation? Newspapers and national identity in the devolved UK. *The Sociological Review*, 52(4), 437-458.
- Said, E. W. 1978. *Orientalism*. London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Sanadhya, T. (2012). *Bhut Len Ki Katha: Girit ke anubhav*. [The story of the haunted line: The experience of Girit by Totaram Sanadhya]. B. V. Lal., A. Kumar., and Y. Yagav (Eds.). Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan.
- Sanadhya, T. (1973). *Fiji Dwip men Mere Ikkis Varsh* [My Twenty-one years in Fiji]. Varanasi: Banarsi das Chaturvedi. [First published 1914]. Agra: Shivlal Aggrawal and Company.
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20.
- Shameem, S. (1987). Gender, Class and Race Dynamics, Indian Women in Sugar Production in Fiji. *Journal of Pacific Studies*, 13, 10-35.

- Siegel, J. (1992). Language change and culture change amongst Fiji Indians. In T. Dutton (Ed.). *Culture change, language change: Case studies from Melanesia* (pp. 91-113). Canberra, Australia: Pacific Linguistics C-120.
- Tinker, H. (1974). *A new system of slavery: The import of Indian labour overseas 1830-1920*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Usher, L., & Leonard, H. (1979). *This Is Radio Fiji: Twenty-five years of service 1954-1979*. Suva, Fiji: Information Services South Pacific.

Author

Farzana Gounder, is Lecturer at the International Pacific Tertiary Institute, New Zealand. Email: fgounder@ipu.ac.nz