

# Transnational Indian Diaspora Engagement and development: The transilient Fiji-Indian diaspora engagement and assimilation in transnational space

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## Abstract

*The Indian immigrants or 'girmitiyas' under British indenture labour system have gradually transformed to Indian Diaspora in transnational space be it from Mauritius, British Guiana, Trinidad, South Africa, Fiji, Jamaica or Suriname. The onset of globalization has stimulated the contemporary diasporic movements and social and economic networking and in turn, a greater diasporic engagement... Cheaper means of communication and growth of mass media and ICT, have contributed much to diaspora movement across border, creating 'transnational communities', globally. Today, the diaspora has been emerged as a new resource and an agent of change and development. It has been a major source of remittance, investment, and human and social capital and has been emerging as an alternative development strategy. The role of diaspora in contemporary development of both country of origin and country of residence draws greater attention today than ever before.*

*The 'girmitiyas' in Fiji that arrived between 1879-1916 have undergone generational changes, and gradually transformed to distinct Fijian-Indian Diaspora within Fiji and abroad. These 'transient' and 'transilient' migrants, through a 'double' and 'triple' chain- migration have formed distinct transnational Fijian-Indian diaspora especially in the Pacific- Rim metropolitan countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and USA. They are deeply engaged in social, cultural and economic development and assimilated in transnational space. Bollywood films have helped binding Indian diaspora especially Fiji-Indians abroad who have maintained Indian cultural identity in the global space. The perspectives on diaspora engagement and development, and the Fiji-Indian diaspora engagement in transnational space, need to be fully understood.*

*The paper examines the relationships and perspectives on migration-diaspora and development, and it explores the contemporary perspective focusing on Fiji girmitiyas' transformation to transnational Fijian-Indian diaspora, and the nature of their engagement, and assimilation in transnational space, taking Australasia as a case in point.*

Key words: Development, diaspora engagement, Fijian Indian diaspora, girmitiyas, transnational space.

## 1. Introduction

Diaspora engagement is an important part of diaspora-development debate and it has emerged as a development-policy issue. Diaspora has emerged as a new resource and an agent of change and development. The role of diaspora in development of both country of origin and destination draws greater attention today than ever before. Diaspora has been a major source of remittance, investment, human and social capital. Besides, diaspora community provides humanitarian assistance during emergency natural disasters. The diaspora communities have diverse skills and resources that can leverage to promote change in their country of origin.

The onset of globalization has stimulated the contemporary diasporic movements and social and economic networking and in turn, greater diasporic engagement. Cheaper means of communication and growth of mass media and ICT have contributed much to movement of people across border, creating 'transnational communities', globally.

There has been a marked shift in emphasis in Indian diaspora discourse from social and cultural dynamics of Giritiyas towards use of diaspora resources (human, financial, social, and entrepreneurial) in development and their engagement as an alternative development strategy. Much of diaspora literature however, deal with perspectives of diaspora to development of home countries mainly through remittances but little work has been done on diaspora's engagement in the host countries.

The key questions are—What kind of diaspora engagement policies and development initiatives is needed? How to improve diaspora engagement for the development of country of origin and country of settlement?

The relationships between migration, diaspora and development are critical in understanding diaspora formation and engagement and need to be fully explored.

## **2. Migration, Diaspora and Development**

Migration and diaspora are closely linked to development. "The migrants of today are the Diaspora of tomorrow. While all Diasporas are products of migration, not all migrations make up a Diaspora (Skeldon, 1997). Migration through diaspora, establishes relationships between people and place. People maintain strong ties with their country of origin and assert their ethnic identities in the host country.

Diaspora is a community of people who live outside the country of origin but maintain connections with it (Diaspora Alliance, n.d). Broadly, Diasporas are defined as "transnational communities of a particular kind, characterised by having experienced movement from an original homeland" (ibid.). The term "diasporas" convey the idea of transnational populations, living in one place, while still maintaining relations with their homelands (IOM, 2006). They maintain geo-ethnic group identity in host country. Diasporas are a kind of ethnic group, but not every ethnic group forms a diaspora, nor do all immigrations lead to formation of ethnic group (Sheffer, 2003, cited in Safran, Sahoo and Lal, 2009). People, place and identity are the cornerstones of diaspora discourse.

The relationships between Diaspora and development are positive and mutually beneficial. The simple linear relationship between migration, diaspora and development is as follows:

Migration → Diaspora formation → Diaspora engagement → Development

The primary or 'pioneer' migrants form a 'primary diaspora' and secondary migrants form a 'secondary diaspora'. The secondary migration from a country of residence to another country and formation of a kind of 'chain diaspora' is a rapid ongoing process, forming 'transnational' diaspora communities. Schiller, Basch and Blanc (1995) were first to use the concept of transnationalism to capture the dynamics of migration (cited in Sahoo and De Kruijf, 2014:6). In

the 'diaspora' literature, the terms such as 'primary or 'pioneer' migrants', 'secondary migrants', 'trans-migrants, and 'transilient migrants' are commonly used. Primary or 'pioneer' migrants are those that migrate to a destination for the first time and transilient' or secondary migrants refer to migrants who re-migrate to another country after primary migration. Due to globalisation and social networking, creation of transnational social space, a chain diaspora has been a rapid process.

Since the early 1990s, there is recognition that the diaspora has propensity to create multiple associations and long-distance connections (Meyer, 2001). The diaspora has been seen as a 'brain gain' and it has replaced the classical emphasis of the 'brain drain' approach, which saw skilled migration as a permanent loss (Siddiqui and Tejada, 2014). The diaspora views skilled migrants as carriers of a 'social capital' that is to be organized and harnessed for development, and leading to the rise of a new agent in development discourse (Lowell and Gerova, 2004; De Haas, 2006; Katseli et al.,2006;Wickramasekara,2010;Weinar,2010;Tejada,2012, cited in Siddiqui and Tejada,2014).Johnson and Sedaca (2004) provide an account of diaspora-related development programmes looking at remittances, community development, diaspora business linkages, diaspora investment and knowledge transfers. Lowell and Gerova (2004) provide a valuable categorization of diaspora mechanisms, including "optimal brain strain, return migration, financial instruments, entrepreneurial investments, hometown associations, immigration and trade and professional diaspora networks". Newland (2004) analyses the impact of diaspora inputs on poverty reduction and offers suggestions for donors to strengthen the impact of development assistance by making transnationalism an engine for development (Cited in IOM, 2006).

### **3. Diaspora formation and Engagement**

The 'migration-development nexus' (Faist and Fauser, 2011) is critical in understanding diaspora engagement. Diaspora engagement depends upon the processes of migration and diaspora formation. The emigrant-homeland relationship that defines the concept of diaspora has shifted, and in order to understand and explain the nature of diaspora, it is necessary to examine the role of origin states in their formation and persistence (Gamlen, 2006). Much of diaspora formation and engagement depend upon the type of migration (forced or voluntary); nature of migration (permanent or temporary); migrants' travel experience or 'routes'; place of origin (peaceful or conflict zone).

The onset of globalization has stimulated the diasporic movements and social and economic networking and in turn, greater diasporic engagement. Today, a "new type of hyperconnectivity" has emerged, creating a networked diaspora (cited in Economist, 2011). The Economist (2011) in an article, "Weaving the World Together" notes that Diasporas are now connected "instantaneously, continuously, dynamically and intimately to their communities of origin."

Much of the diaspora engagement discourse identifies the loyalties and obligations that migrants hold towards their countries of origin as the motivation justifying their engagement (Sinatti and Horst, 2014). Diasporas are often inclined to engage at the local level, usually in their place of origin, where they are familiar with the context, in many cases, have family ties (The Guardian, 2013). The diaspora community engagement also depends upon the bilateral relations between

the country of origin and country of settlement. Migrants' transnational networks in the globalised world play a crucial role in transnational engagement. The diaspora engagement however varies widely from local, national to transnational, and the form of engagement varies from charity, philanthropy, relief and welfare assistance to development (ibid.).

Policy makers now recognise the value that diaspora bring to development through their effective engagement. Several governments in Asia have institutionalised their engagement with the diaspora, for example, India (Ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs), China (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office), Philippines (Philippines Commission on Filipinos Overseas), Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and South Korea (The Guardian, 2013).

#### **4. Transnational Indian Diaspora**

India has one of the world's oldest and largest global Diasporas with approximately 30 million people of Indian origin (PIOs) and expatriate Indians (NRIs) outside India. The Indian immigrants or '*girmitiyas*' under British indenture labour system have gradually transformed to Indian Diaspora in transnational space be it from Mauritius, British Guiana, Trinidad, South Africa, Fiji, Jamaica or Suriname. They are engaged in transnational space and contributing much to the development of country of origin as well as the host countries.

##### **Fijian - Indian Diaspora: From Girmitiyas to Transnational Diaspora**

Fiji received indentured labour migration, the *girmitiyas* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that has transformed to a transilient Indian Diaspora. The first ship '*Leonidas*' with 463 indentured labourers from India arrived in Fiji on May 14, 1879. They were brought on five-year agreement or 'Girmit'. The SS *Sutlej* was the last ship that landed in Fiji on 11 November 1916. The indenture labour migration lasted 37 years and over 60,000 Indian migrants arrived in Fiji during 1879-1916. Indenture labour system officially ended on 1 January 1920 bringing an end to Girmit period.

By 1920, there was also a sizeable free Indian immigrant population in Fiji and they were mostly farmers from Punjab and traders, and merchants from Gujarat. The Gujarati immigrants, mostly Hindus first arrived in 1906 (Miller, 2008). With the arrival of Gujarati community, started the establishment of trade, commerce and business in Fiji and they 'established local business networks with ties to India' (ibid.).

The Girmitiyas embraced the local culture and assimilated themselves in the 'alien' lands (Mahanta, 2015). In Fiji, the 1920s and the 1930s were seen as the period of cultural revival as a result of religious specialists' visits from home land. This period witnessed an emergence of the Fiji Indian identity. The Girmitiyas transformed to 'Fiji Indian' with identity of Indian ancestry and after the independence in 1970, they were variously called as 'Fiji-born Indian', 'Indo-Fijians', 'Fiji- Indians' and so forth (Naidu, 2017). With adoption of new Fiji Constitution in 2013 and restoration of democratic government in 2014, all ethnic groups in Fiji now, has a common Citizenry i.e., Fijian. After a long quest for national identity, Fijians of Indian descent have acquired a common national identity for the first time. This identity has further widens the Fijian-Indian Diaspora transnationally.

## Fijian-Indian Emigration and Formation of Fijian-Indian Transnational Diaspora

Since the end of Indentured labour system in 1920, the Girmitiyas in Fiji had undergone massive transformation. They transformed themselves from bonded agricultural labourer to small holding farmers, artisans, govt. officials, entrepreneurs and skilled professionals. Since the late 1960s, Fiji witnessed Fijian-Indian emigration that was accelerated after Fiji's Independence in 1970. The changing political-economy in Fiji after independence led to large-scale outflow of Fijian-Indians mainly the skilled professional categories to the Pacific Rim metropolitan countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and USA (Mohanty, 2001; 2006). In the last 4 decades or so, more than 122,000 Fijian-Indians have migrated abroad from Fiji i.e., more than one-third of Indian population in Fiji, and about 82 per cent of total Fiji citizen migration. The emigration trend accelerated due to the events of coups and political instabilities in 1987, 2000 and 2006 and the problem of non-renewal of land leases since 1997. On an average, over 4,700 Fijian-Indian emigrated annually from Fiji between 1987 and 1999, most of them were skilled individuals (Table 1). On an average, 500 Fijian-Indian professionals migrated annually during the period 1987-1999 and this rate was much higher during 2000-2007. The large-scale emigration has resulted in a declining Fijian-Indian population to nearly 37 per cent in 2007 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

**Table 1: Emigration of Fijian -Indian Professional Workers during 1978- 2012**

Year	Fijian-Indian migrants	Total Fiji citizen migrants	% Fijian-Indian migrants	Annual average Fijian-Indian emigration rate	Professional Migrant Workers			
					Fiji-Indian	Annual average Fijian-Indian	Fiji Total	% Fijian-Indian to Fiji total
1978-86	17,358	20,703	83.8	1,929	-	-	-	-
1987-99	57,159	64,209	89.0	4,763	6,008	501	6,869	87.5
2000-07	37,174	43,113	86.2	4,647	6,749	844	7,446	90.6
2008-12*	10,536	21,774	48.4	2,107	3,001	600	6,445	46.6
<b>1978-12</b>	<b>122,227</b>	<b>149,799</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>3,595</b>	-	-	-	-

Source: Mohanty, M. based on data from Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1978-2012. \*The declining Indian emigration figure during 2008-2012 is due to changing citizenry category as "Fijian".

The '*girmitiyas*' that formed 'old' or 'primary' Indian diaspora in Fiji, rose from misery, poverty and exploitation as indentured labourers, and gradually transformed to an affluent community and through their secondary migration, formed a distinct 'new' Diaspora of Indian descent abroad. The trans-nationalisation of Fiji Indian diaspora is a rapid process in the last three decades. Fijian of Indian descents formed distinct 'transnational' diaspora abroad by the late 1990s through large-scale emigration of third and fourth generation girmitiya population especially in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA. Lal (2017:8) noted that the Indo-Fijian "diaspora of the 'Twice Banished' is increasing daily as people leave Fiji for freedom and opportunity elsewhere..." Today, an estimated 158,000 Fijian-Indian transnational Diaspora live in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and the United Kingdom (Table 2).Australia is home to

the largest proportion of Fijian-Indian Diaspora accounting for little less than one-third of total diasporic population and followed by New Zealand (26 per cent), USA (21 per cent), Canada (17 per cent) and the UK (4 per cent) (Table 2).

**Table 2. Fijian-Indian Transnational Diaspora Population**

Country	Year	Total Fiji-born population	Estimated Fijian – Indian population	% Share to total Fiji-Indians
Australia	2011	56,979	49,572	31.4
New Zealand	2013	52,755	45,897	29.0
United States	2013	39,235	34,526	21.9
Canada	2011	24,925	22,000	13.9
United Kingdom	2015*	6,754	5,943	3.8
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>180,648</b>	<b>157,938</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Mohanty, M collected from various sources including Country Census Population Reports, Australia (2011) and New Zealand (2013) \* UN estimated.

The ‘twice migrants’ and ‘thrice migrants’ Fijian–Indians to another country from the country of residence or settlement (e.g., Australian Fijian- Indian to the UK or USA) and a ‘chain diaspora’ formation are on-going process. When the ‘chain diasporas’ are taken into account, the Fijian-Indian global diaspora population is estimated around 170,000. The Fijian-Indian students also constitute a significant number abroad including USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, India and elsewhere. When the student diaspora is added, the Fijian-Indian global diaspora population will be higher than estimated value.

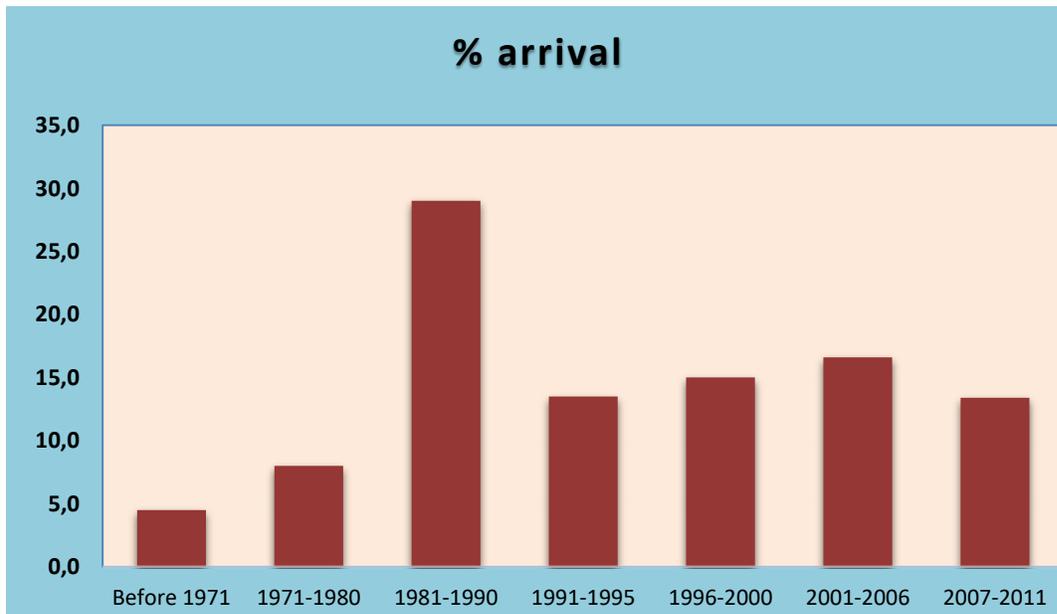
### **Fijian-Indian Transnational Diaspora Engagement: The Case of Australasia**

Migration from Fiji to Australia became significant in the late 1960s but increased rapidly after Fiji’s independence in 1970 (Government of Australia, 2016). In 2011, there were 56,979 Fiji-born people in Australia, of this, nearly 54 per cent were females and the rest were male and 44 per cent were in 25-44 year age group (ibid.). About 47 per cent were Hindus, 13 per cent Muslims and 9 per cent Catholic (ibid.).

#### **Period of arrival of Fiji-born migrants in Australia**

Nearly 5 per cent Fiji-born migrants arrived Australia before 1971 and largest share i. e., nearly 30 per cent arrived during 1981-1990 (Government of Australia, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the coups and political instabilities in Fiji pushed large scale Fiji-Indian migrants abroad and mainly to Australia. About 15 per cent migrants arrived Australia between 1996-2000, 17 per cent between 2001-2006 and 13 per cent between 2007-2011 (Figure 1). The decade 1981-1990 witnessed arrival of a bulk of Fiji-born migrants in Australia (ibid.)

**Figure 1. Period of Arrival of Fiji-born migrants in Australia**

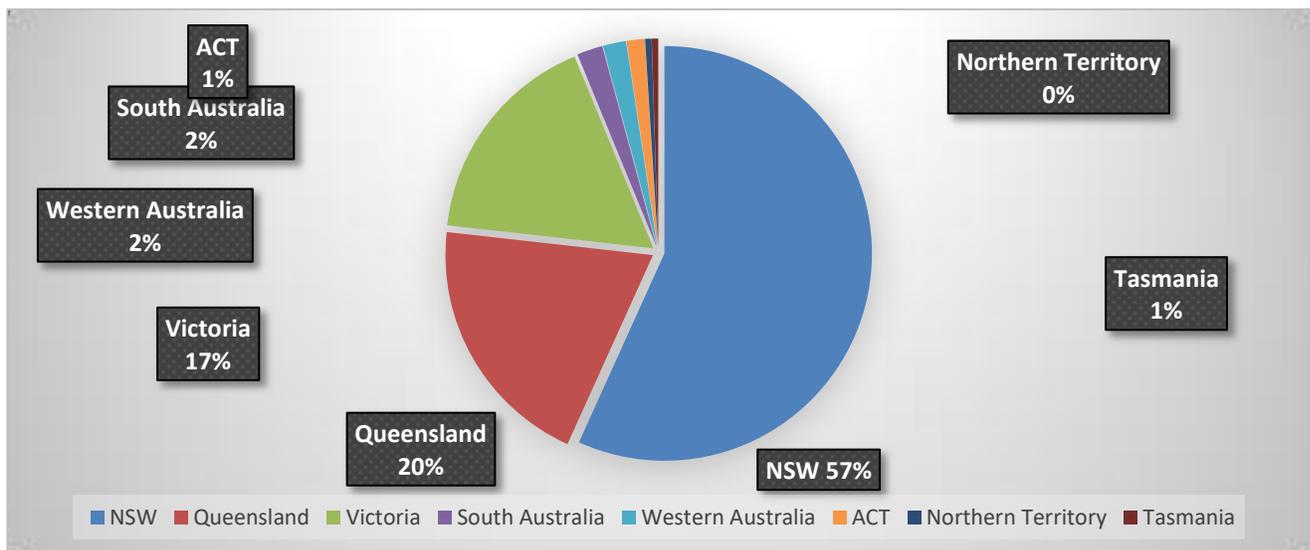


Source: Mohanty, M. based on data from Government of Australia, 2016.

**Geographic Concentration of Fiji-born (Fijian –Indian) population in Australia**

A bulk of Fiji-born population in Australia i.e., nearly 57 per cent are concentrated in New South Wales followed by Queensland (20 per cent) and Victoria (17 per cent) (Figure 2). These three provinces together contain about 94 per cent of Fiji-born population and largely Fijian Indians.

**Figure 2. Geographic Concentration of Fiji-born population in Australia, 2011**



Source: Mohanty, M. based on data from Government of Australia, 2016.

### **Fijian-Indian Migrants in New Zealand**

Fijians immigrated to New Zealand temporarily under various work schemes between 1967 and 1987 (Leckie, 2015). They laboured in arduous, low-paid agricultural and scrub cutting work in the lower North Island or in tussock grubbing in North Canterbury (ibid.). By 1969, their work included fruit picking, forestry, vegetable and tobacco cultivation, and halal slaughtering, most who worked under these schemes were Fijian-Indians (ibid.). The initial exodus of Fiji-Indian migrants due to political instabilities in Fiji was sudden, and migrants were forced to leave behind family, friends, homes, possessions and jobs (ibid.). Emigration increased in the late 1990s as insecurity due to non-renewal of land leases came up and Indian farmers faced the likelihood of becoming landless (ibid.). Between 1996 and 2013, the number of Fiji-born residents in New Zealand increased by 34, 000, totalling a Fiji-born population to 45,897 in 2013 (ibid.).

A unique Fijian-Indian culture has developed in New Zealand through emigration, which is distinct from other New Zealand Indian diaspora (Leckie, 2015). The Bollywood films have helped binding Indian diaspora especially Fiji-Indians who have maintained Indian cultural traits in New Zealand and elsewhere. Khan (2011) noted that in New Zealand, the profile of the Fiji Indian migrants in the years after the coup differed from the usual migrant characteristics. They were married with families, skilled and professional, with a high standard of English, and relative familiarity with New Zealand systems and had high expectations (ibid.). Consequently, the Fijian Indian diaspora assimilated well into the New Zealand society.

### **Fijian-Indian Engagements in Australasia**

Fijian-Indian diaspora maintain their cultural traits and identity in Australia and New Zealand. They have contributed significantly to promotion of trade and development. For instance, before 1987, Fijian immigrants found it difficult to get island and Indian ingredients (Leckie, 2015) and they relied upon a few Indian importers or friends bringing food from Fiji. Today, largely as a result of the settlement of Indo-Fijians in New Zealand, an extensive range of foods, clothing, utensils and Hindi videos are available (ibid.). Indo-Fijians have been mainly responsible for importing 'yaqona' to New Zealand (ibid.). Sport and leisure activities reinforce Fijian social ties and Fijian-Indians are prominent within New Zealand Boxing Federation (ibid.). They have their own media services. For instance, Radio Tarana, a Hindi radio station is located in Auckland. Community newspapers have flourished for example, Indian Observer, and internet site Indian Newlink established in New Zealand in 2001 (ibid.).

Fijian-Indian diaspora have contributed to all economic sectors in Australia and New Zealand including agriculture, horticulture, business, trade and commerce, transport and communication, industry and to the socio-economic development. The participation rate of Fiji-born in labour force in Australia was 73 per cent in 2011 and nearly 47 per cent were employed in skilled managerial, professional or trade occupation in Australia (Government of Australia, 2016).

The exodus of Fijian-Indians to New Zealand during the late 1980s coincided with high unemployment in New Zealand and many of them were engaged in less skilled jobs, and some opened shops in New Zealand (Leckie, 2015). In 2013, Indo-Fijians had the second-highest labour force participation and highest annual median income among Pacific groups (ibid.). Fijians (Fijian-Indians) are now well represented in the professional, technical, service and retail sectors (ibid.). In Australia and New Zealand, the total wealth (financial, land and physical assets) of Fijian-Indian diaspora community is relatively high. For instance, the median individual weekly income of Fiji-born in Australia (including Fijian-Indian community) aged 15 years and above was \$699 compared with \$ 538 for all overseas-born and \$597 for all Australian-born (Government of Australia, 2016).

Khan (2011) highlighted the significant contributions of skilled and professional Fiji Indian migrants to New Zealand's economy and productivity. According to Khan (2011), the post-1987 immigration from Fiji led to a huge increase in Hindu religious activities in New Zealand, including temple building, celebration of festivals, and pujas and mandalis (religious gatherings). A smaller proportion of immigrants from Fiji are Muslim who have contributed to New Zealand culturally as diverse Islamic community (ibid.). In sports, Fijians are prominent within the New Zealand in rugby, soccer, netball and boxing. Indo-Fijians are prominent within the New Zealand Boxing Federation (Leckie, 2015).

Fijian-Indian diaspora has assimilated well into the Australia and New Zealand society. Most Indo-Fijian migrants regard Australia as their new home and have little intention of leaving a country where they can build a more secure future and are treated as equals (Voigt-Graf, 2009).

Fijian Indian diaspora have contributed significantly to cultural and social development. Various religious Fijian-Indian diasporic organizations have been formed in Australia and New Zealand that have contributed significantly to welfare and social and economic and art, music and cultural development.

### **Fiji-Indian Associations Abroad**

Association formation by the Fijian-Indian Diaspora abroad is not very uncommon. Some Fiji Indian associations in 'transnational space' include for example, Christchurch Fiji (Indian) Association; Fiji Community Association, Queensland; Fiji American National Association (FANA), California; Canadian Federation of Fiji Organisation (CFOFO). In New Zealand, Fiji Indian Association was established in Auckland in 1977, with educational, cultural, sporting and social aims (Leckie, 2015). The Fiji Indian Association was incorporated under the New Zealand Incorporated Societies Act, 1906 on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005. It organised sporting and cultural events and sponsored Indian dancers and musicians from Fiji and India (ibid.).

In Australia, Indo-Fijians have replicated the cultural and religious associations they had created in Fiji (Voigt-Graf, 2009). The Indo-Fijian associations in Sydney for instance, cooperate closely with the Fiji-based associations, receiving support in the form of visiting preachers and getting information on important religious events. In return, the Sydney-based associations financially support the activities of their counterparts in Fiji and are involved in charity work (ibid.).

## **Religious and Community Organisations**

Various religious and community organisations were formed by the Fijian-Indian Diaspora communities abroad. In New Zealand, the University of Auckland Fiji Club is dating back to the 1960s (Leckie, 2015). Other religious and community groups in New Zealand include for example, Arya Samaj Pratinidhi Sabha, New Zealand; Arya Samaj Christchurch Satsangh Mandal; Auckland Satsang Ramayan Mandali; Brahma Kumari Centre New Zealand, Wellington; New Zealand Muslim Association; Sikh Society-Auckland. They are engaged in religious and cultural, social and sporting activities and in business and trades as well. Fijian-Indian community associations are also engaged in common advocacy and welfare issues and offer sports and cultural programmes.

## **Political and Legal Engagement**

For restoration of political stability and democratic form of government in Fiji, various pro-democracy movement started by Fijian-Indians abroad after the military coups of 1987, 2000 and 2006 in Fiji. Fijian-Indian migrants in Australia and elsewhere have been an important source of support for “Indo-Fijian politicians and Indo-Fijian dominated political parties in Fiji” (Voigt-Graf, 2009). Before the 1999 elections, for instance, Mahendra Chaudhry organised fundraising events for his Fiji Labour Party in Sydney, Brisbane and Auckland (ibid.). Political activism especially by Fijian-Indian diaspora abroad led to keen interest in Fiji’s internal political development including electoral politics during 2014 general election.

Much Fijian of Indian descent took part actively in politics in transnational arena. For instance, in Australia in 2016, five Indian-origin including two women were among the 200 candidates that contested for general elections. Among them was a Fiji Indian Lisa Singh of Labour Party. Similarly, in New Zealand, Sir Anand Satyanand, a Fijian of Indian descent who was a lawyer, judge and ombudsman. He was the 19th Governor-General of New Zealand. He was born and raised in Auckland to an Indo-Fijian family in 1944. Rajen Prasad, a Fijian-Indian is a politician in New Zealand who was elected to represent the Labour Party in the 2008 general election. In June 2004, Prasad was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner of the newly established Families Commission, serving until 2008. Another Fiji born Indian, Ajit Swaran Singh, became the first Fiji-born Indian to be appointed to the District Court Bench in New Zealand when he was sworn in as a judge on 4 November 2002 (Wikipedia, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Diaspora has been recognised as a new resource and an agent of change, and alternative development strategy. The realisation of the vast developmental potential of Indian diaspora community has led to a shift in emphasis towards diaspora engagement in development. The growing diaspora chains and rapid transnationalisation of diaspora redefine the diaspora engagement and call for greater participation of government, NGOs and private sector.

Fijian-Indian community has emerged from ‘giritiyas’ to ‘transilient’ migrants and distinct Indian diaspora in transnational space especially in Australasia. The transnational Indian diaspora engage well in social, economic and political arena of the transnational space. There is a constant exchange of goods, ideas, social and cultural information, networking and movement of

people, transnationally. In order to fully capitalize the potential of Fijian-Indian diaspora sustainably, the home and host countries need to design a sound diaspora-development policy.

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