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## Professor Sushila Chang Makes History and Becomes the First Female Vice-Chancellor in Fiji



Professor Sushila Chang

Professor Sushila Chang made history when she became the first female Vice-Chancellor of not only The University of Fiji but also the country.

Professor Chang comes from a family of seven siblings and had a humble beginning to life. She stated that her mother was her inspiration growing up.

“Even though she had no education she encouraged all of us to study hard as that was the only way she knew for us to get out of poverty and have decent lives. My mother also especially encouraged the three girls in the family to push to the maximum. I think in a way she was living vicariously through us and I am very thankful for that.”

The media team at the University interviewed her and the following are her responses:

**1. Please give us a brief background of yourself growing up and the struggles that you had faced to be at the position you are now.**

My siblings and I depended on scholarships for our studies. I had scholarships for both my undergraduate

degree as well as postgraduate.

I did my PhD in France and it was an eye opener as I had to be proficient in another language- French. This gave me the courage to undertake challenges even when they are daunting, enjoy new cultures, the people and experiences and more importantly to integrate and make many outstanding friends who are still very close to me and, enjoy it all. I loved it. I have been blessed to be able to live and work in different countries- Malaysia, Singapore, France, United Kingdom, Australia and now Fiji and it has been very empowering, and enjoyable. I have learnt so much from the people I have worked with and met during these times.

**2. What are some of the highlights of breaking the ‘glass ceiling’?**

I believe that human beings are mostly the same in their needs. Breaking the ‘glass ceiling’ is not rocket science and can happen when there is good leadership, when meritocracy is exercised and good work, leadership, teamwork, humility, honesty and integrity is respected and valued.

I was appointed Head of Faculty/School

## UPCOMING EVENT



The University of Fiji  
Celebrating 15 Years

# DECEMBER Graduation 2019



Saweni Campus, Lautoka  
Friday, 6 December, 2019  
10.00 a.m. - 12.00 noon

when I was very young and since then I have moved on to different roles. I had a couple of bosses who believed in empowering and developing staff, sometimes even to greater heights than they had achieved. They saw potential and supported growth. They were true leaders who had no vested interest except the good of the organization. I have learnt a lot from these few.

**3. What are your views on women empowerment in the Asia Pacific? What more could be done in this regard.**

I think it varies from country to country. Some countries are doing it better than others especially those who value meritocracy.

More can be done of course as always. Awareness at an early age of equity and gender equality is necessary. This could start in primary schools when children are at the formative age. Teachers and parents play an important role. If we start early there will be no biasness at the workplace, I believe.

I have noticed that women do suffer at times from the Imposter Syndrome. To combat this, we could have programmes for all staff and, also special ones for women, especially those who need to be supported and shown the ropes. I have initiated and led many of these programmes in my previous lives at other Universities and the outcomes have been remarkable. There have been more women in leadership roles and successful in the roles.

There have been more early career women staff who now consider and aspire to be a leader in their discipline or field or organisation. I am very pleased with the outcomes and I hope that I can help initiate more of these. An experienced mentor is useful and valuable to all staff and perhaps more so to women who are generally less open in a group or team.

I never had a mentor but I am a mentor to 5 aspiring leaders and I believe that they have found this relationship very useful.

**4. What is your advice to young women who want to break the ‘glass ceiling’ and have a successful career?**

The glass ceiling cannot be broken if one

is passive. You have to work hard and for sustainability have the qualities for it such as competence, vision, Emotional Quotient, integrity and others.

Opportunities for growth and leadership unfortunately do not drop from the sky. One should also be proactive and resourceful.

I would suggest that one should seize the opportunity when it comes, if they can. Or create the opportunity or step in/volunteer/respond when the opportunity arises. Keep an open mind and be positive. People like to be around positive, enthusiastic people and your bosses are possibly the same. If I may add do not expect returns, otherwise you will be disappointed every day. It will come and when it comes it is a ray of sunshine to boost you to another level. I also think a woman being successful at work is complemented by personal and home life. When I am happy at home I am happy at work and vice versa. So try to have a balance. Enjoy your work, your friends, family, take breaks when needed, do things you like when not at work and do not take oneself too seriously. Laughter is good as is camaraderie and having good rapport with the people one works with is good.

It is good to start thinking of how we can all be leaders in whatever we do. For those with the skills they should then be developed accordingly and organisations should have platforms and opportunities available.

The University of Fiji hosted its 6th Sir Moti Tikaram Lecture on Friday, September 27, 2019 at its Saweni Campus.

This year’s lecture was delivered by Professor Subramani on the topic “Fiji’s Endangered Hindi”. He made a very strong statement on the predicament of vernacular languages in Fiji, and said both iTaukei and Hindi are rapidly disintegrating towards becoming endangered languages; iTaukei because the spoken language is not enriched by written literature, and the amount of writing it is very small, hardly to fill a single shelf in a library; and Hindi is in equally dire state because the number of students taking Hindi programmes is dwindling at secondary and university levels, and the knowledge of Devanagari in the community and, in particular, among young people is fast fading. The situation is alarming yet there appears to be no great anxiety in the communities, or among educators which is a worrying fact. What is at stake is the social and spiritual welfare of the people in Fiji. They have to realize vernacular languages are human resources, and are part of human rights, they contain the memory and history of the communities, and they are essential for wholesome and cohesive existence of the communities.

Unfortunately, our education as a whole lacks far-sighted vision, governed as it is by soulless pragmatism, and corporate mentality. We have not probed deeply on what is worth knowing and learning. Nothing very profound has changed since the colonial government established the

education system, and marginalized the vernacular languages, making English, ‘the language of money and power’; not only the means of communication, but also the tool for examining our intellectual and spiritual life. Postcolonial education means rehabilitating our language and culture. And that rehabilitation has not started.

**6th Sir Moti Tikaram Memorial Lecture**



*Front from Left: Professor Julian Moti, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang, Mrs. Anshu Subramani, Professor Subramani.  
Back from left: UniFiji Student Association President, Ratu Sailosi Dawai, Dean, Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law, Professor Shaista Shameem, Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Anil Tikaram.*

Professor Subramani was speaking about the two Fijian languages in the context of International Year of Indigenous Languages observed in 2019 to raise awareness of the plight of vernacular languages in the world.

However, Professor Subramani's main subject was Sir Moti Tikaram who was a great proponent of multilingualism which he believed was the basis of multiculturalism. Professor Subramani gave new focus to Sir Moti's address to Hindi writers in 1998 at the University of the South Pacific. The following excerpt gives the general tenor of Professor Subramani's address:

“Sir Moti recognized that bilingualism greatly expands our knowledge horizon, but he had slightly different understanding in advocating multilingualism which is competence in three languages. He was thinking of diminishing the silence between the communities, the silence that had bred years of mistrust and prejudice. Breaking the silence means bridging the ethnic divide and being moved by each other's plight. The multilingual person is at once an insider and outsider, and has multiple perspectives that can contribute towards reducing mutual fears and intolerance.”

We still don't have any strong discourse on multilingualism and multiculturalism in our civil society. For such ideas to take root in society there has to be vigorous conversations about the virtues of knowing three languages, giving us multiple perspectives or ways of looking at the world, thus allowing us the space to cultivate empathy and understanding. The lecture was meant to stimulate such conversations.

Professor Subramani spoke movingly about his own attempt to write novels in Hindi where he was able to document and archive spoken Hindi in Fiji.

“While writing in both English and in Hindi for creative purposes, I realized why I was dissatisfied with my work in English: to put it what simplistically, in English I was writing mostly from the head; in Hindi I was close to the human heart,” he said. Writing in the mother tongue allows one to express what is close to the human heart, and give form to those deep emotions that get lost in translation.

Professor Subramani closed his speech by emphasizing that it was a decisive moment for Hindi in Fiji. He didn't just analyze the situation; most importantly he put forward an agenda to restore and regenerate the vernacular languages. For this to happen, he said, language activists have to be trained who will cultivate a way of describing the issues involved in language maintenance, raise awareness at all levels, promote the work of documenting the language, and at the same time lobby with Government, University authorities and community leaders for proper place for vernacular languages, as enshrined in Fiji's Constitution. The language activists will be crusaders for the language who will perform the task of advocacy and empowerment. No doubt this is a monumental task. Therefore teams of field-workers will have to be prepared nation-wide.

A site where this work can begin immediately, before the vernacular languages lose more ground, and further erosion takes place, is The University of Fiji's Institute of Hindi Language and Culture Studies and the Centre for iTaukei Studies; they have the formal structure to start the work of training language activists. Of course, there have to be many more such centres or sites throughout the country. Professor Subramani said, “Let this be the Fijian effort to deal actively with language endangerment in this International Year of Indigenous Languages.”

## UniFiji Hosts International Conference on Renewable Energy



UniFiji staff, students and distinguished guests at the International Conference on Renewable Energy.

The University of Fiji in collaboration

with Pacific Islands Development Forum and University of Southern Queensland, Australia hosted the International Symposium on Renewable Energy, Environment and Climate Change (ISREECC) commenced on August 20, 2019 at the Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi.

The Chief Guest at the event, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, Honourable Jone Usamate, stated that the symposium represented great opportunity to share ideas and knowledge.

“Even though climate change is undeniably upon us now, we must continue to push for more climate action on the international stage and we can do this more effectively if we show that society-wide climate mitigation and adaptation is possible here in the Pacific Region. This Symposium is all about knowledge. Knowledge needs to be shared, so that it grows and multiplies,” he explained.

He further commented that he hoped the Symposium would contribute to proactive changes in institutions and countries, lead to collaboration that has an impact on the area covered by the theme and to outputs that contribute to the ultimate outcomes and impact that the world needed.

During his keynote address, the Secretary General-Pacific Islands Development Forum, Mr. François Martel said that the Symposium on Renewable Energy came at a critical time in the Pacific Islands pathway to build resilience and advocate for stronger mitigation, adaptation and resilience efforts to the large emitters of this world in order to tackle climate change.

Professor Anirudh Singh, Dean, School of Science and Technology, mentioned that ISREECC 2019 was organized in response to the need to publicly discuss developments in the sciences and knowledge in the area of climate change.

“Discussions on these

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

issues have so far been taking place within separate meetings and forums. Therefore, there is a need for a unifying event that brings together the latest research and work in climate change with the most recent developments in the assessment, prediction and application of renewable energy for clean, affordable and sustainable energy generation in Fiji and the Pacific,” he reiterated.

The Symposium deliberated on critical topics such as institutional framework for sustainable development with community resilience to Climate Change, and Climate Justice through Community-based Adaptation, Climate Change and Sustainable Development – finding the coherence between the NDCs and the SDGs, Biofuels for transportation and power generation in Fiji - current policy and future ambitions, Modelling Energy Management Systems: New Approaches, Methods and Prospects and much more.

## Staff and Students Welcome Professor Chang



*Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Anil Tikaram, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang and Professor Tupeni Baba with staff and students after the welcoming ceremony.*

Staff and students welcomed the new Vice-Chancellor of The University of Fiji, Professor Sushila Chang on Wednesday, September 4, 2019.

The memorable ceremony, spearheaded by the UniFiji Students Association (UFSA) and initiated by the current President, Ratu Sailosi Dawai, commenced with students leading Professor Chang to the stage while holding onto the UniFiji flag, Fiji flag and

flags of other Pacific Island countries. This gesture signified that Professor Chang was graciously and whole heartedly welcome to the University.

The Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Anil Tikaram, formally welcomed Professor Chang stating that UniFiji had created history by having the first female Vice-Chancellor of not only the University, but the country. He also mentioned that during the selection process, Professor Chang stood out from the other applicants and wished her a productive, happy and long stay at the University.

A significant exchange of the UniFiji flag followed whereby the flag was transferred from the former Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Subramani, to Pro-Chancellor Mr. Tikaram and it was finally handed to Professor Chang. This exchange signified the smooth and transparent change in leadership.

Professor Sushila Chang addressed the very elated staff and students. She stated that she had found Fiji to be a beautiful country with even more beautiful and caring people. She said that she had many ideas to move the University forward to be ‘work ready, global ready, future ready’.

She explained that with a great line-up of staff and students, she was happy to start her new role and progress the University further.

“I think you should be very proud of what the University stands for. Its sits on very strong foundation on strong values and not many Universities have that. The challenge will be that with this fast changing world, how do we keep our values and at the same time be progressive and flexible and change the norm with what we have to do to ensure that our students are ‘work ready, global ready, future ready’,” she explained.

Professor Chang’s address was heartfelt by the audience and she received a standing

ovation post her address.

The ceremony ended on a high note with UFSA team recognising and awarding staff who toiled hard to keep the University running on a daily basis and students who had represented the University of different occasions and brought glory to UniFiji.

This was the first time that a ceremony as such was held at the University. Prior to the welcoming ceremony, the UFSA Executive body held a special general meeting discussing their accomplishments over the past year.

## UniFiji Hosts Pinktober Event

The University of Fiji hosted the Pinktober event on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at its Saweni Campus.

The Chief Guest at the event, Assistant Minister of Youth and Sports, Honourable Alipate Nagata stressed the importance of hosting cancer awareness. He stated that men also were susceptible to breast cancer, despite the incidence of breast cancer in men being 2%.

Honourable Nagata stressed that this awareness would need to trickle down to the communities. He advised the attendees that the lessons learnt from the function should be taken back to their respective homes, to the communities, to the Schools and to the workplaces.

He also encouraged all to get medical examinations to detect cancer cases early.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang, while addressing the crowd, said that cancer could be avoided if people were aware of it.

She explained that lifestyle was extremely important- alcohol and tobacco are items that needed to be avoided and an individual would need to eat well, exercise and rest.

Professor Chang stressed that cancer awareness should not be confined to one month and be all throughout the year.

She mentioned about the BRCA gene. This gene maybe present in those people who

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From Left: Dean, Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Professor Fred Merchant, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang, Honourable Alipate Nagata, Dr. Elick Narayan, Dr. Abhijit Gogoi and Fiji Cancer Society members.

have had cases on cancer in their family lineage.

Dr. Elick Narayan of the Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences, further stressed on the point of creating awareness of cancer throughout the year.

Presenting statistics, Dr. Narayan noted that breast cancer was by far the most common cancer in women worldwide, both in the developed and developing countries.

“One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime while one out of one thousand men would be diagnosed with breast cancer. The risk factors for male breast cancer are heavy alcohol use, BRCA2 gene mutation, aging, chronic liver disorder, heredity and excess body weight,” he explained.

He also explained the importance of staging cancer. This would show the progression of the cancer to the other body parts, the size of the tumor as well as if the lymph nodes are affected. With the progression of each level of cancer, the survival rate decreases. For example, if it is detected at stage 1, the survival rate over a 5 year period is 98% while if it is detected at stage 3 or 4, its drops to less than 65%.

Explaining further, he explained that

## Professor Shameem- only female PhD in Juridical Science in Fiji

Professor Shaista Shameem, the Dean of the Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law, is the only female PhD holder in law in Fiji. She has just attained her Doctorate in

the incidence of male breast cancer was increasing.

“Education is important. Male breast cancer accounts for less than 1% of all breast cancer, but they too are at risk. Awareness and self breast exams is the starting point to identifying male breast cancer at earlier stages and potentially saving lives,” he noted.

In conclusion he stressed that cancer is so limited- it cannot cripple love, it cannot shatter hope, it cannot corrode faith, it cannot eat away inner peace, it cannot destroy confidence, it cannot kill friendship, it cannot shut out memories, it cannot silence courage, it cannot reduce external life and it cannot quench the spirit.

Giving the closing remarks, Professor Fred Merchant, Dean of the Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences, a cancer survivor, stressed on the importance of KPDTSH motto of the Fiji Cancer Society.

“K stands for Knowledge, P stands for Prevention, D stands for Diagnosis, T for Treatment, S for Support and H for Hope. Hope is the most important ingredient in the will to live,” he stated.

Juridical Science (SJD) from the University of Waikato, New Zealand and will be graduating at a ceremony in December.

Professor Shameem already had a PhD in

Sociology from the University of Waikato which she had attained in 1991. She taught Sociology, Social Anthropology and Women’s Studies at the School of Social Sciences at Waikato University from 1985 until 1997 when she returned to Fiji to practise law, initially at Gates and Associates and then as Director of the Fiji Human Rights Commission from 1999 until 2009 when she joined the School of Law, The University of Fiji as Associate Professor.

Professor Shameem credits her parents and teachers for fostering her intellectual curiosity from an early age. She is the eldest in a family of four sisters. Her mother was a school teacher, a first generation Fijian of Indian heritage, and her father was a poet and playwright who was born and raised in what is now Pakistan and was a student writing Urdu poetry in support of independence during anti-colonial protests by Gandhi. He was training to be a doctor when family circumstances interrupted his studies. Professor Shameem said that her parents raised their children to be independent and to achieve highest possible qualifications.

“I am the eldest so the pressure was on me to show by example. My family was not wealthy and my parents had to work hard for everything. Independence in all aspects of life and self-reliance was an important value that my parents instilled in me at an early age. I have worked from the age of 22 as I have valued the independence that my careers have given me both as a woman and as a professional,” she said.

Professor Shameem’s various careers range from journalism (including as a filmmaker), to academia in New Zealand and Fiji, to law. During her years with the Fiji Human Rights Commission she was the Commission’s chief litigator, appearing in court on behalf of clients of the Commission with various human rights complaints.

Professor Shameem’s SJD thesis is about constitutions and why they have to be legitimate. She said that she had been working on the subject for 10 years.

“I had been involved in a number of constitutional and human rights cases

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*Professor Shaista Shameem with UniFiji Law students.*

as Director of the Fiji Human Rights Commission and during my work I realised the importance of the contractual relation between a government and its people; we called it the ‘social contract’. Since this contractual relationship is expressed in a constitution it is important to ensure that any constitution is legitimate. There are guidelines for constitutional legitimacy. I chose the topic because of Fiji’s turbulent constitutional history and my involvement in national and international human rights issues,” she stated.

When asked about the breaking the glass ceiling, Professor Shameem said that she was not convinced that women had become truly liberated and free just because they were educated.

“The prejudices against women are still there in society; for example promotions are still hard to come by for women. People still think that women should be responsible in the kitchen, be the primary caregivers in the family as well as have a career. Women’s days are always longer. Playing a double or triple role is so normal for women that no

one questions it,” she noted.

She said that she was fortunate to have had her family’s support along the way to be able to study to her heart’s content.

Professor Shameem encouraged women to decide what they wanted and then go ahead and do it- this is what independence meant.

She also noted that more could be done to empower women in Fiji including reforming the education system. The education system would need to provide a kind of autonomy required for our young women to be able to think freely without fear of breaking society’s prejudiced rules for women.

She advised young women who wish to be successful in the legal fraternity to be definitive of their choices.

“To have a successful legal career a person has to work long hours, be dedicated to the profession, have integrity and common sense and be a good communicator with empathy for the disadvantaged. The rest will follow,” she concluded.

The University of Fiji, under the guidance of Ms. Manpreet Kaur and Ms. Priyatma Singh headed 2nd Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific Region in partnership with Hamburg University.

The International Conference was held at Tanoa Waterfront, Lautoka on August 21-22, 2019.

Scientific researchers, PhD scholars and academics from Fiji, Pacific and international gathered at the conference sharing their research findings on areas pertaining to climate change. The two-day conference featured papers, research and scientific poster presentations.

Ms. Manpreet Kaur and Ms. Priyatma Singh presented a Scientific Poster Titled *Place Attachment and Cultural Barriers to Climate Change Induced Relocation: Lessons from Vunisavisavi Village, Vanua Levu, Fiji.*

The Scientific Poster was part of a collaborative paper the team wrote that will feature in the Conference Handbook “Managing Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific Region”, a further volume of the award-winning book series “Climate Change Management” published by Springer.

Other discussions centered along climate issues being faced in the Small Island Developing states, adaptation, mitigation, its social implications and much more.

## Student Recruitment Visitation

The University of Fiji, in its effort for broaden its student recruitment spectrum had a successful marketing outreach programme at schools in the Western, Central and Northern Division. Students were advised on the University’s course offerings, fees structures as well as why UniFiji would be a suitable choice for them.

Speaking about the outreach, the Community Relations Manager, Ms. Shirley Prasad stated that the University conducts such outreach programmes each year.

## 2nd Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation



*Attendees at the 2nd Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation at Tanoa Waterfront Hotel.*

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“Student recruitment visitation is a means of marketing where we are able to talk directly to the students and advise them about the career path they can have with UniFiji. This year during the visitation we were able to gather a lot of information in regards to the programmes that students are interested in pursuing and the programmes that they wish the University could commence,” she explained.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang and many other academic staff were involved in the outreach programme.

The visited 25 Schools in the Central Division, 24 Schools in the Western Division and 23 Schools in the Northern Division.

## UniFiji Student Crowned Vodafone Miss Sugar Queen

Final year Language, Literature and Communications student, Ms. Christal Kapoor was crowned Vodafone Miss Sugar Queen on Saturday, September 28, 2019.

Ms. Kapoor said that as a student of UniFiji she was taught well by experienced lecturers.

“It was due to their teaching that I was able to present myself well with confidence. I will continue to be a good ambassador for the university no matter where I go because the University has given me more than education it has motivated me to reach for the stars and helped me realise my potential as a young Fijian woman,” she explained.

In addition she stated that she was proud to be have studied at UniFiji- a University where young women are empowered.

“As a university that has women leaders at the helm we should be proud that we are raising young women leaders through the leadership of our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang, Registrar, Ms. Karishma Mani and Assistant Registrar, Ms. Nathasha Mudaliar. Women are the future and Unifiji is just beginning to change history with its female students and staff,” she said.

She added that she would not only help

UniFiji students but all Fijians by being a voice for them to raise their issues and concerns at a national platform.

She encouraged young women to raise their voice and make use of any opportunity that comes their way to empower them.

“Pageants are one such platform. People have the preconceived notion that pageant girls are supposed to be tall and slim and fair this is false and ancient ideology and it needs to be removed. I wasn’t the tallest or the slimmest I just wanted to make a change and help my fellow Fijians raise their issues and concerns through me,” she stressed.

Ms. Kapoor is progressing to the Miss Fiji Pageant and stated that she would continue to be a voice for the youth in Fiji and continue to be a good ambassador for UniFiji.



*Ms. Christal Kapoor during her crowning.*

## Hindi Diwas Celebrations

The University of Fiji celebrated the Hindi Diwas celebrations on October 4, 2019 at its Saweni Campus.

The Chief Guest at the event, Shreemati Padmaja Ji, Indian High Commissioner to Fiji, said that Hindi Language was important to Fiji.

She explained that our ancestors came

from different parts of India which is a multilingual country. She explained that as a thread that joins gems together to form a necklace, the Hindi Language did the same- it joined all the different languages, customs and traditions in India. Hindi acted as the lingua-franca in India which is why it was named the official language.

“I am very pleased that Fiji is among those few countries in the world where Hindi is given the status as one of the official languages,” she stated.

She elaborated that speaking about Hindi didn’t mean that one should not respect other languages and cultures. She said that education to her meant understanding and respecting other cultures, traditions and languages.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang mentioned about the Institute of Hindi Language and Culture Studies that would soon be launched by UniFiji. The institute will incorporate Hindi Studies, Centre for Diaspora Studies and the Rabindranath Tagore Centre. This will complement the work done by the Centre of iTaukei Studies.

The institute’s primary objective is to promote the learning of Hindi Language and keep alive relevant values and traditions. The institute will also be the repository of Hindi and Literature and promote writings in Hindi language.

The winners of the poetry and poster competitions were also announced at the event.



*From left: Shreemati Padmaja Ji, Vice-chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang, Assistant Registrar, Ms. Nathasha Mudaliar and Registrar Ms. Karishma Mani.*

## 4<sup>th</sup> अक्टूबर, 2019 हिन्दी दिवस समारोह - मनीषा

### रामरक्खा, हिन्दी विभाग

हिन्दी दिवस समारोह के अवसर पर, मैं आप सबका हार्दिक स्वागत करती हूँ।

विशेष रूप से आज की मुख्य मेहमान भारतीय उच्चायुक्त, महामहिम मेडम पद्मजा जी, आपका हार्दिक स्वागत करती हूँ। आप अपना बहुमूल्य समय निकालकर यहाँ पधारी हैं, यह हम सबके लिए गर्व की बात है। हमें यह पूर्ण विश्वास है कि आपके सुन्दर विचारों एवं आपके सहयोग से फीजी देश में हिन्दी एवं अन्य सभी मातृभाषाओं को संरक्षण एवं मार्ग दर्शन प्राप्त होता रहेगा। आपका हम हार्दिक स्वागत करते हैं और आपके साथ मिलकर हिन्दी भाषा के प्रचार एवं प्रसार सम्बन्धी कार्यों को करने के लिए अभिलाषी हैं।

हम सब यहाँ एकत्र होकर मातृभाषा हिन्दी दिवस मना रहे हैं। इस अवसर पर हिन्दी भाषा के महत्त्व पर और हमारे जीवन में हिन्दी भाषा की आवश्यकता पर विशेष प्रकाश डाला जाएगा। हम हर वर्ष हिन्दी दिवस मनाते हैं क्योंकि-1947 में भारत देश की आजादी के बाद मातृभाषा हिन्दी को भी आजादी मिली और परिणाम स्वरूप 14 सितंबर 1949 के दिन हिन्दी भाषा को राजभाषा

का दर्जा प्राप्त हुआ। तब से हर वर्ष यह हिन्दी दिवस के तौर पर मनाया जाता है। आज का दिन भी बहुत महत्त्वपूर्ण है, आज अध्यापक दिवस भी मनाया जा रहा है। आप सभी को 'अध्यापक दिवस' की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं।

इस वर्ष हिन्दी दिवस समारोह का विषय है-

**“अपनी संस्कृति और अपनी पहचान को बचाने के लिए मातृभाषा हिन्दी का संरक्षण करें”**

यह विषय इस बात को सोचकर रखा गया है ताकि हम हिन्दी भाषा के महत्त्व को समझें, क्योंकि यदि भाषा जाग्रत है, तो समझो संस्कृति सुरक्षित है और यदि संस्कृति सुरक्षित है तो हम और हमारा समाज पूर्णतः सुरक्षित और उन्नत है।

**मेरा भी यही मानना है कि “हिन्दी भारतीय संस्कृति की आत्मा है”**

अर्थात् समाज को उन्नत बनाने के लिए, संस्कृति और मातृभाषा विशेष महत्त्व रखती है अतः हमसबको हिन्दी भाषा के पठन- पाठन पर विशेष ध्यान देना चाहिए।

आज थोड़ी देर के लिए हम याद करें अपने उन पूर्वजों को, जिन्होंने गिरमिट काल की कठिन यातनाओं को सहते हुए भी हिन्दी भाषा और संस्कृति का साथ नहीं छोड़ा, उन हालातों में भी साथ नहीं छोड़ा, जब कि उन्हें यह भी नहीं मालूम था कि वे कहाँ हैं और अपने देश भारत से कितनी दूर हैं।

आज फीजी में हिन्दी पठन- पाठन की समस्त सुविधाएं उपलब्ध हैं, फीजी सरकार और भारतसरकार का भी पूर्ण

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## Era kidavaki Professor Chang o ira na ivakalesilesi kei na gonevuli ni Yunivesiti

Era kidavaki Sushila Chang, na Vice Chancellor ni Yunivesiti ni Viti ena ikava ni Seviteba, 2019 o ira na gonevuli kei na ivakalesilesi ni Yunivesiti ni Viti

E tuvanaka ka liutaka na soqo guiguilecavi dredre qo na isoqosoqo ni gonevuli ni Yunivesiti ni Viti.(UFSA) E liutaki Professor Chang, na vulagi dokai ki na vatavata ni veiqaravi o Ratu Sailosi Dawai, na peresitedi ni soqosoqo ni gonevuli ni Yunivesiti ni Viti ka ra vakarewataka tu na gonevuli na drotini ni koronivuli, kuila ni Viti kei na drotini ni veimatanitu vakaPasivika. Na ivakarau oqo e vakaraitaka ni sa mai ciqomi ena loma ni Yunivesiti o Professor Chang.

E a kidavaki Professor Chang o Anil Tinkaram na Pro-Chancellor ka kaya ni o Professor Chang e iseve ni marama ka mai cabeta na itutu ni Vice-Chancellor ena Yunivesiti ni Viti ka vakakina ena noda vanua e Viti. E vakaraitaka tale ga ni a matalia duadua o Professor Chang mai vei ira kece na volakerekere mai ena itutu qo ka nuitaka ni na vuavuai, marautaki ka dede talega e na loma ni Yunivesiti.

E a soli na kuila ni koronivuli ko Professor Subramani na vice chancellor tu vakawawa kivei Mr. Tinkaram na Chancellor taumada ni se bera ni qai soli sara yani vei Professor Chang. Na veisolisoli oqo e vakaraitaki ni kena sa mai veisau na itutu ni veiliutaki. Sa qai vosa o Professor Sushila Chang vei ira na ivakalesilesi ni koronivuli kei ira na gonevuli. E vakaraitaka ni o Viti edua na vanua rairai totoka ka vakauasivi na kedra totoka kei na nodra veikauwaitaki na lewenivanua. E kaya talega ni sa tu vua eso na inavunavu me torocake kina na Yunivesiti ena itavi ni veivakarautaki ki na cakacaka, veivakarautaki ki na vuravura rabailevu kei na veivakarautaki ki na veisiga nimataka.

E a vakamacalataka na nona marau ni sa vakarau tekivu na nona itutu vou kei na dua na matatimi vinaka ni vakalesilesi kei na gonevuli ka me vakatorocaketaka ki liu na Yunivesiti ni Viti Au nanuma ni dodonu mo ni dokadokataka na veika e tutaka na Yunivesiti. E dabe tiko ena dua na yavu kaukauwa ni veika e da vakamareqeta ka sega ni kune ena levu na Yunivesiti. Na bolebole levu oya na kena maroroi tiko na yavu oqo ena maliwa ni veiveisau kei vuravura, eda na maroroya vakacava na veika eda vakamareqeta ka toso ki liu ena gauna vata oqori. Me da ciqoma ni rawa ni da veisau me veiganiti kei na gauna eda donumaka ka me vakadeitaki ira na noda gonevuli mera vakarautaki vakacacacaka, rabailevu na nodra rai ka vakavakarau ki na gauna se bera mai.

E a tarai ira na vakarorogo na nona vosa o Professor Chang ka vakavinavina vakalevu ni oti na nona vosa.

E mai tini na soqo ni veikidavaki na nodra vakaicocovitaki na vakalesilesi ni Yunivesiti ka ra dau samaka tu na lomanibai ka okati talega kina eso na gonevuli ka ra matataka ka vakarogo

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