

Editorial

In early 1990, a group of young intellectuals in Fiji decided to establish an independent research and publications institute. They called this institute the Fiji Institute of Applied Studies. The founding members adopted a Charter which stated the objective of the Institute as the 'protection, promotion and advancement of knowledge and education'. Clause 4 of the Charter stated that the Institute 'shall encourage and foster a spirit of inquiry whereby students and scholars shall pursue and undertake advanced, applied and critical evaluation of issues which confront them in their contemporary social settings'.

In May the same year, the Institute appointed its first full-time research officer. The functions of the research officer were, inter alia, initiating the research and publications program of the Institute. In this program featured the 'publication of a scholarly journal of high academic repute'.

Since then, the Institute took out numerous publications. Now, 13 years later, the Institute is taking out the first issue of its journal. The gestation period of the journal has been long, but in many respects unavoidable. One major constraint was the rapid movement of tertiary qualified people, both Fiji citizens and others, out of Fiji on account of political and academic repression in the country. This initial constraint now turns out to be an advantage as there is now not only a wide spread of Fijian intellectuals throughout the world which demands focussed research-based output on Fiji.

In addition, the initial adversities generated by the military coups and repression in the country, created numerous opportunities for researchers. Over the past decade or so, numerous research work, reports, and dissertations have been done on various aspects of the country and the people. Unfortunately, most such works have remained either confined to the personal libraries of research supervisors or report sponsors or, at best, to the University library where access to these by readers from outside the University community is severely constrained.

While there are numerous high quality journals where researchers on Fiji have been publishing their work in increasing numbers, such output generally remains alienated from both the decision makers in Fiji as well as the growing intellectual community in the country. The thirst for knowledge within the country is rising. Other than individuals, numerous institutions also, including NGOs, trade unions and political parties, require such knowledge. In many cases, such institutions now base their programs and activities on knowledge emanating

from well-researched work.

Locally, the once popular social science journals, *Review*, *South Pacific Forum*, and *Pacific Perspective*, which used to contain a large number of articles on Fiji, ceased publication some years after the 1987 coups.

Fijian Studies would, we hope, fill the numerous gaps that currently exist in the generation, development and wider dissemination of intellectual output on Fiji.

The Fiji Institute of Applied Studies is pleased that the journal has a distinguished group of academics on its Editorial Advisory Board. The Board, chaired by Professor Brij Lal, has people from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. We intend to see similar variety in the contents of the journal.

It is our hope that you will find *Fijian Studies* stimulating and refreshing, and that you will send your thoughts to us on how to improve the journal. The next issue will contain papers on the sugar industry in Fiji, an industry which is at a critical crossroad now. The May 2004 issue will be dedicated to issues concerning sustainable development, environment, and energy while the November 2004 issue will be dedicated to issues concerning governance.

It is our intention that we will continue to produce issues that are of contemporary relevance to Fiji. To this end, your support would be greatly appreciated. You will find more information on the journal and the Institute at our website: <http://www.fijianstudies.org>

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Trustee, Fiji Institute of Applied Studies.