

ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

Sanatan Fiji is the largest organization of Hindus in Fiji. We have 117 primary and secondary schools, 85 Sanatan temples and thousands of Mandalis, Mahila Mandals and Youth Groups around Fiji. Sanatan Fiji was founded on 29 November 1958. It suffices to underscore, however, that the Sanatan Dharm was in Fiji for almost 80 years prior to its official establishment and for a timeless period before that in India.

This brief commentary highlights our achievements, services to the victims of TC Winston, involvement in religious activities, existing and future projects and education initiatives in the period under discussion.

Our Achievements

- One of the major achievements was mooted -the idea of bringing uniformity in our pooja and sanskaar vidhis. This became necessary owing to the numerous complaints received that many pundits or purohits conduct poojas and sanskaars differently and sometimes erroneously. In a meeting at the Sanatan Fiji Headquarters the members of recognised Brahman Sabhas in Fiji agreed to perform Sanatan sanskaars and poojas based on agreed principle and methodology. Soon after this convention, two books will be printed – one for the karamkand brahmans which will include pooja mantras and vidhis and the other for yajmans that will outline requirements for respective pooja or sanskaar including samagri lists. It is important to stress that this is a collaborative effort of the recognised purohits/pundits and the Sanatan Fiji and its Education Board. Dr. Ajal Kumar, Dr.Akhila Sharma and Mr.Virendra Lal have taken the leading role in this initiative.
- With other Hindi organizations (Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Then India SanmargaIkya Sangam, Sai Organisation of Fiji, Hare Krishna Movement, Fiji Hindu Society, Gujraat Samaj of Fiji, Sikh Society of Fiji and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Sanatan Fiji was able to convince the Minister for Education to remove Fiji Hindi from the Hindi national examination papers. The 2015 Hindi national examination papers had a section on Fiji Hindi. It was agreed that Fiji Hindi is grammatically incorrect or vague.
- Sanatan Fiji played an important role in the establishment of Hindi Parishad Fiji. The Hindu organizations mentioned above decided to form a body to defend a common cause concerning the teaching and learning of Hindi. The idea of forming a body was initiated by the Education Board of Sanatan Fiji. Notably, Sanatan Fiji is proud to report that its Acting National Secretary, Mr.Virendra Lal is the National Secretary of Hindi Parishad Fiji.
- Sanatan Fiji is also happy to record that it was able to convince the University of the South Pacific to continue teaching Hindi Language. Initially, USP gave a directive to its Centre Directors not to enrol students in Hindi classes for the academic year 2017. After discussions with the Vice Chancellor and with the financial assistance from the Indian High Commission, USP agreed to enrol students for Hindi classes. Sanatan Fiji is pleased to note that all three Universities located in Fiji will now offer Hindi Language as one of the subjects in their first degree programmes. It is our responsibility now to encourage our children to take Hindi language as a subject in their primary and secondary schools so that there are sufficient numbers to take Hindi at the tertiary level.

- Sanatan Fiji recognises with appreciation the Prime Minister's intervention to close all Hindu faith-based schools for Ram Naumi.
- The Sanatan Fiji calendar for the first time was prepared in consultation with Brahman Sabha organizations. We are pleased to report that 5000 calendars printed were all sold out. Looking at this positive response, we endeavour to print more next year.

Our Services to the victims of TC Winston

Sanatan Fiji assisted the TC Winston victims with the following activities.

- Sanatan Fiji served lunches to thirty seven schools in Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki and Taveuni. This continued for a couple of weeks after the devastation caused by TC Winston.
- It also distributed ration packs in Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba, Savusavu and Taveuni. A nine ton truckload of ration packages were sent to Tavua and Ba and a five ton truckload of ration packages were sent to Rakiraki. In Rakiraki a ration package including food, clothes and bedding were distributed in Dugnapatu, Madhuvani, Ellington, Volivoli, Naria, Wairuku, Dodi and Vatumami areas. It also distributed gumboots to people in Volivoli and also handed out hammers, pinch bars and nails In Tavua we distributed ration packs and cooked food in Yaladro, Balata, Malele and Davota areas. We delivered 110 packs of food parcels in Ba with our Ba Branch President, Mr. Dharendra Nand to distribute in the affected areas in Ba.
- Our Sanatan branches from Lautoka, Drasa, Nadi, Tuva, Uluisila, Cuvu, Nadroga, Navua, Suva and Rewa also distributed ration packs in affected areas in the Western division. Our Labasa Branch sent food items to Savusavu and Sanatan Headquarters shipped one truck of ration packs to Tavueni to be distributed by our Tavueni Branch officials and National Vice President Mr. Parma Nand.
- Relief supplies received from our Auckland branch were distributed in Lautoka and other affected areas.

Religious Activities

- Sanatan Fiji successfully organized a Hari Katha at Sanatan Shiv Mandir, Rewa Street Samabula by Shree Janendra Shastri of Laxmi Narayan Temple – Holland Street, Suva from 30th June to 4th July 2015.
- The Pravachan of Brahmishi Shri Guruvanandji Swami (Shri Gourde) from India on 7th July 2015 was successfully organized at Sanatan Shiv Mandir with approximately 600 people in attendance.
- The Sanatan annual 'rot-pooja' was successfully organized at the Sanatan Headquarters on 12th July, 2015.
- The Diwali celebration was organised at Sanatan Shiv Mandir. Hon. Alvick Maharaj, a member parliament was the chief guest. In his address he encouraged youths to take part in religious activities And uphold the principles of Sanatan Dharma Rangoli competition was also organised. The first prize was won by Kavita Prasad of Nasinu, Lata Singh of Suva won the second prize and third prize winner was Vigyeta Lal.
- Sanatan Sthapna Diwas was celebrated successfully on 29th November, 2015.
- Hindi Symposium was successfully organized at Sanatan Shiv Mandir hall on 18th December.

- Food distribution was made to Old People's Home and Saint Vincent's Home on 1st January, 2016.
- Swami Saraswati Rajeshwaranand ji gave a discourse from 1st to 6th March at Sanatan Shiv Mandir.
- Amma Bejuben ji also gave pravachan on Bhaktigeet on 15th and 16th of March.
- Another Katha on Purans by Swami Anant Achariya was organised at Sanatan Shiv Mandir from 8th to 14th May, 2016 to mark the 100th year post Girit era celebration. A lot of people benefited from Swamiji's very lively pravachans Swami ji performed a Katha at Sanatan Nagar in Lautoka, in Navua and in Ba.

Existing and Future Projects

- The Indian High Commission has agreed in principle to provide books for the Library to be built at the top floor of the Shiv Mandir hall. Architectural work has begun for this project. And also talks have begun with the Suva City Council to develop the vacant land beside the Sanatan Shiv Mandir on Rewa Street Samabula. Sanatan Fiji is intending to build a two storey building for commercial use.
- Narewa property - Our three storey Narewa property was recently renovated and rented out. This property is generating income for SSDPSF. Nabua Sanatan School - This school is rented by the Government of Fiji and turned into Nabua Sanatan Institute by the Ministry of Education. It offers a variety of technical courses and a large number of students are benefitting from it.
- Lautoka Sanatan Primary School - This school has also been approved by the Ministry of Education to be converted into a technical institute but Memorandum of Understanding is yet to be signed.
- Sanatan Fiji has embarked to strengthen its youth wing. To achieve this all our branches are now directed to form youth wings as well as other educational initiatives.
- We are happy to note that the Sanatan Fiji Headquarters is now enclosed by its perimeter fence. Recently burglar grills have been installed to improve security.

Appreciation

Sanatan Fiji expresses its extreme appreciation to Cuvu Branch for hosting the 57th annual convention. It also thanks the other branches for participating in this convention especially those that were severely affected by TC Winston. In particular, Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba and Tavueni Branches of Sanatan Fiji. These areas faced the major wrath of the cyclone causing massive damage. Despite this they were able to stand up on their feet and prepared to attend the convention. This in itself is a great achievement. The other branches are appreciated for gathering and distributing relief assistance to the affected Fijians.

Conclusion

Sanatan followers believe the whole world is one big family, "Vasudewakutumbakam" and there is presence of GOD in every living being, "Sia Ram may sab jag jani, karhu pranaam jorh yug paani". This year's convention theme: SANATAN – PROMOTING UNITY IN DIVERSITY will work towards instilling good values into people so that one becomes a good human being.

Virendra Lal
National Secretary (Acting)

