

UniFiji's First PhD Graduate in English

Dr. (Ms) Kamala Naiker became the second PhD graduate from The University of Fiji on March 29, 2019. She is the first PhD graduate in the area of English.

Dr. Naiker said that her journey into completing Doctoral Studies had been captivating.

“As I was the Pioneer student graduating with a Masters Degree in the year 2009 from this university, had an enthusiasm to study further to complete PhD studies in English. Zestfully, in Semester 1, 2010, I registered in this programme,” she commented.

She mentioned that her focus for her Doctoral programme was author Bharati Mukherjee's work after reading the blurb on the novel *Wife* (1975).

Dr. Naiker explained that she chose Mukherjee because her novels explored the ways which dealt with the pain of exile, alienation and isolation, and conversely, how these texts approached matters relating to the liberation of women from the oppressive social order of patriarchy, and the traumatic experience of immigration, matters of identity and agency within an overarching patriarchal and alienating world.

She further mentioned that during her Doctoral programme, her supervisor had to leave for Canberra during early part of her writing thesis.

“Since then till Semester 1, 2018, I worked on my Thesis without a supervisor. My family's and friends' unwavering faith, support and confidence in me helped me to persevere. With Professor Subramani on board, I enrolled in Semester 2, 2018, polished my thesis under his guidance and submitted it for examination,” she explained.

Her children, Mithran Naiker and Neelam Naikar said that they were proud of her completing her PhD.

“It is quite astounding to us that she was able to complete a transition from Science to Arts, through completing Diploma, Bachelor of Arts, and Masters and PhD degrees, all while having two children and holding down full-time teaching jobs to which she devoted significant attention given her passion for Education. And yet we don't remember a moment when she didn't have time for us,” they said.

A total of 229 students graduated in various disciplines including Commerce, Science, Law, International Relations and Medical field.