

## **Subramani's New Novel Launched**

The University of Fiji's Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Subramani's book *Fiji Maa; Mother of a Thousand*, 2018 was launched on July 15, 2019 during the inaugural international conference on Forced Labour hosted at the Saweni Campus.

The renowned author spent 14 years researching and writing the astonishing book.

He described the book as not only being a novel but an archival work which can be used as a 'dictionary' of Hindi used in Fiji.

"It begins about 1940s and arrives at the contemporary period and many things change during that period- the language changes, the way people dress changes, technology changes, transport, house, clothing, entertainment, and more. And when we are writing a novel, in the background you have to keep all that in mind. To write an epic novel like that is an obsession. It is hard work and digging into your memory and defining not only the characters, but it also digging deep into yourself and bring out all the residual substance," he explained.

Professor Biman Prasad mentioned that the narrative brought out what would probably have been lost.

"Professor Subramani spent 14 years writing this book. This is one of the finest contributions not only to Girit Literature, but indeed Indian literature as a whole," he stated.

Mr. Daneshwar Sharma in "Subramani's Fiji Maa: A Book of a Thousand Readings" explains that there are a thousand ways to read the book.

"Mother of a Thousand has been in gestation for more than a decade and Subramani has exhausted all of his personal memories and literary acumen to meander through the lifetime of the protagonist Vedmati. The novel follows Vedmati from her early childhood, schooling and married life in a rural Labasa village to her widowed old age in urban Suva," he wrote.

Furthermore he wrote "These narrations of her life story are scattered with histories of a no longer-existing rural life and its people. The novel can be explored using various themes, including women's emancipation, subaltern history, the global extension of Mother India, lost rural life of the remote islands, Indian culture in a foreign land and the trauma of forced migration."

This 1026 pages long novel is published by The University of the South Pacific Press. It is available at the USP Bookshop and at the Enlightenment Book Centre at The University of Fiji. The book will be launched in Bhopal and New Delhi in November, 2019.