

Hindi Roundtable Discussion

In collaboration with the World Hindi Secretariat, Mauritius, The University of Fiji organized a Hindi Roundtable Discussion on 14 October 2020 on the theme "Progressive Future and Hindi."

Speaking at the debate, the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem, said that language is an integral part of the culture.

"Language and culture are indispensably related. We mustn't be casual about our language because the language gives us an insight into the culture. Language and culture are about emotion and not necessarily about politics," she said.

Mrs. Manisha Ramrakha, the Chairperson of the Roundtable discussion, spoke about a true incident taken from "Kisaan Sangh Ka Itihaas" (1931), of Pundit Ayodhya Prasad Sharma's life and sacrifice to promote Hindi and cultural values. Pundit Sharma sacrificed his teaching job but did not compromise the quality of Hindi and cultural values and ethics that he wanted to teach the students.

She said the theme of the Roundtable was inspired by this incident to encourage the current generation to plan strategies for a progressive future of Hindi.

Mr. Naresh Chand, Lecturer, Fiji National University, questioned on the dropouts in students studying Hindi Language. He said that we are not against the English Language. He impressed that we should not get so engrossed in English Language that we forget our Mother Tongue.

Ms. Subashni Kumar, Lecturer, Fiji National University, said that the younger generation believed that speaking English was more impressive than Hindi, perhaps, because of the widespread presence of English education and job opportunities.

"If we want our younger generation to use the Hindi language we need to make it more marketable and simple. They want to use Hindi but they are not seeking to speak Sanskrit Hindi. In this digitized world, we should be familiar with online tools for Hindi teaching and learning. Hindi has Devanagari script which is very scientific and it can be typed using various Hindi software tools. We need to familiarize ourselves with these tools and e-resources," she stated.

The Samabula Campus panelists included Pundit Bhuwan Dutt, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji President, Ms. Shyamla Chand, Senior Education Officer, Hindi (Primary), Mr. Ramesh Chand, Senior Education Officer, Hindi (Secondary), Ms. Rohini Kumar, Education Officer, Conversational Hindi, Mr. Satesh Kumar, UniFiji Lecturer, and Ms. Utra Gurdayal, Retired School Teacher. Other speakers at Saweni Campus were Mrs. Vidya Singh, Lecturer, Fiji National University, Mrs. Suklesh Bali, and Mrs. Shradha Dass.

The speakers reiterated that children should begin learning Hindi Language at pre-school level and to be motivated to continue studying this language.