



## Using Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi in the Primary School Curriculum and Communities in Fiji

Bimal Avinesh Chand <sup>a</sup> , Satish Prakash Chand <sup>b1</sup> 

<sup>a,b</sup> *Fiji National University, Lautoka, Fiji*

### APA Citation:

Chand, B. A., & Chand, S. P. (2022). Using Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi in the primary school curriculum and communities in Fiji. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(Special Issue 2), 1247-1260.

Submission Date:20/07/2021

Acceptance Date:20/10/2021

### Abstract

The use of Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi is often debated in schools and communities in Fiji. Over the years, several studies have been conducted to focus on different facets of language use. While much has been studied about the formal and informal elements of the Hindi language, the views of the community on its use in social and educational settings have not been investigated. The purpose of the study was to investigate the views of the major stakeholders on implementing Fiji Hindi to replace the Standard Hindi currently used in the primary school curriculum in Fiji. Data was collected using three semi-structured interviews and ninety-four questionnaires. The results showed that Fiji Hindi is preferred in social settings that require informal communication, and Standard Hindi is preferred in formal settings. The results also show that participants prefer Standard Hindi for educational purposes and favour its preservation for sustainability.

*Keywords:* Fiji hindi; standard hindi; indo-Fijians; Hindi; Fiji

## 1. Introduction

Fiji is an island nation rich in cultural diversity, with people speaking different languages and dialects. Apart from the minority languages, the major languages and dialects include languages the indigenous and the Indo-Fijian community speak. These two major languages are Hindi and iTaukei. The World Population Review (2020) records Fiji's population of Indigenous Fijians as 54% and Indo-Fijians (Fijians of Indian descent) as 38%. The Indigenous Fijians speak eight different dialects (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2016). The Indo Fijians belong to different denominations such as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Gujaratis, who speak Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu and Gujarati languages.

Since the arrival of the first indentured labourers from across India onboard *Leonidas* in 1879, a new Hindi dialect developed: *Fiji Hindi*. After their arrival, the indentured labourers settled in various geographical locations across Fiji. The difficulty in understanding each

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author:

E-mail address: [satish.chand@fnu.ac.fj](mailto:satish.chand@fnu.ac.fj)

other led to the development of different dialects amongst the Indo-Fijians. As the language developed, it borrowed some words from English and the indigenous languages. Many words, unique to Fiji Hindi, have been created to cater to the new environment where the Indo-Fijians now live and work. The first-generation Indians in Fiji used a language referred to as *Fiji Baat* (boli) or "Fiji talk". This changed as more interaction amid the diverse races and diffusion of the culture occurred due to modernisation and technological advancement. Fiji Hindi is most often the first language of the Indo-Fijians. However, Standard Hindi is formally recognised as the standard language (Mangubhai & Mugler, 2006).

The development of specific languages in schools faces many challenges. Consequently, the teaching-learning and assessment of Hindi in Fijian primary schools have been challenged in recent times. Changes in the nation's laws and conflicting views about the use of Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi have created tensions amongst educationists, policy-makers, scholars, and curriculum developers. According to Lal (2016), the unity among Hindu faith-based organisations such as Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam, Sai Organisation of Fiji, Hare Krishna Movement, Fiji Hindu Society, Gujarat Samaj of Fiji, Sikh Society of Fiji, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and Shree Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji provided a unified approach to convince the Minister for Education to remove Fiji Hindi from the Hindi national examination papers.

Different legislation and policies guide the use of the Hindi language in Fiji. Lately, there has been much debate about whether Fiji Hindi should be incorporated into the school curriculum. The current curriculum uses Standard Hindi for vernacular studies. However, not much research has been carried out to consider the community's views towards Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi. Therefore, this study investigated the views of the major stakeholders in implementing Fiji Hindi to replace the Standard Hindi currently used in the primary school curriculum in Fiji.

### 1.1 Fiji Hindi

Between 1879 – 1916, the indenture system, usually recognised as “*girmit*”, witnessed the arrival of approximately 60,000 Indians to Fiji (Lal, 1983). These Indian labourers who came from different parts of India spoke different dialects and languages. As they worked on plantations, they communicated with each other in their own dialects. Eventually, the contact between the different varieties led to a koine Fiji Hindi (Siegel, 1987).

Several studies have focussed on implementing Fiji Hindi in schools. The focus was also on making the mother tongue (Fiji Hindi) the official language of the Indo Fijians in Fiji. A study on the language use of communication amongst students by Hopf, McLeod and McDonagh (2017) found that 23.1% of the total students use Fiji Hindi. For Indo-Fijians, the home language prevalent is Fiji Hindi (Hopf, McLeod and McDonagh, 2017; Lagi, 2016; Shameem, 2005; Subramani, 2000). Researchers have challenged that Fiji Hindi has become the mother-tongue of the Indo Fijian children and suggested that Fiji Hindi become part of the curriculum and be taught as a subject.

Although Fiji Hindi has strong ties to *girmit* and strongly identifies the Indo-Fijian's, it has inferior status within and outside the community where it is spoken and is never used

formally (Shameem, 1995; Siegel, 1992). It is also not very popular on cultural and religious occasions. Apart from conversational purpose amongst the major racial denominations and teaching conversational lessons in primary schools, Fiji Hindi remains a non-teaching and assessment subject.

Currently, there is no accepted writing script for Fiji Hindi. There is also scarce literature on Fiji Hindi (Subramani, 2000). Fiji Hindi literacy works are not well-liked by Indo-Fijians and are extremely difficult to comprehend (Prakash, 2003). An example is a novel in Fiji Hindi, "*Dauka Puraan*," written by Professor Subramani in 2001. During one of the national language debates, the then Minister for Education, Ms. Taufa Vakatale, stated that languages would be lost if not preserved by the people who speak them (Vakatale, 2000). Considering the perspective of Ms. Vakatale, Professor Subramani stressed that if literature does not grow, then the language will remain static. Fiji Hindi has not grown methodically enough to replace Standard Hindi. The challenge with Fiji Hindi is that it is a pre-literate language and uses many words from English and the iTaukei language (Shameem, 2005). Fiji Hindi has an extensive vocabulary that is taken from English, and therefore, sometimes a word may have more than one interpretive meaning (Kachru, 1986).

### *1.2 Standard Hindi*

Standard Hindi is one of the most commonly accepted and used languages in Fiji. It is one of the vital components of Hindu culture and holds higher status in the Indo-Fijian traditions, customs, and rituals. According to Holmes (n.d), language is the soul's blood into which thoughts run out of which they grow.

Many nations where Indians have travelled and settled during the indenture system have lost their focus on Standard Hindi. They have put their language at risk and are very receptive to English (Geraghty, 1984; Naidu, 1980; Shameem, 1995). The refraction towards English has caused the demise of Standard Hindi in Trinidad, Guyana, South Africa, and Mauritius (Barz & Seigel, 1988). If Indo-Fijians in Fiji are not careful and re-look at their language and cultural structure, they will also lose their language identity. When there is no proper planning to safeguard the standard languages, there is a loss of identity and cultural values (Puamau, 2005).

Standard Hindi is taught at schools as a subject of study and then used as a medium of instruction with varying degrees of proficiency. Standard Hindi, which children learn as a vernacular language at school, is the primary language (Shameem, 2005). According to a study by Lagi (2016), most of the students who study Hindi find it difficult, and like the Indigenous Fijian students, 30% of the Indo-Fijian students prefer not to sit the external examinations for this subject. The study also found that 50% of the Indo-Fijian students were not competent in speaking Hindi.

Students in Fiji come from diverse backgrounds, which may hinder learning a specific language in a multicultural learning context. Standard Hindi has its own status and features. Standard Hindi helps smooth communication and interaction without limitation and clusters all languages and dialects under one language (Meena, 2017). There can be strategies adopted

to keep the true essence of Standard Hindi for future generations, as it is still part of the curriculum (Narayan, 2018).

### 1.3 Legislations and Policy Matters

#### 1.3.1 1997 and 2013 Constitutions and the use of Hindi in schools

The Fiji Islands 1997 Constitution granted equal status, usage and function of the iTaukei, Hindi and English languages (Government of Fiji, 1997). However, English is the official language for communication in schools. During vernacular classes, Standard Hindi is used for teaching Indo-Fijian students. Assessment of vernacular for Indo-Fijian students is conducted in Standard Hindi as well.

Compared to the 1997 constitution, the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji shows a change in focus. While the 1997 constitution focussed on the Hindi language, the 2013 constitution favours conversational areas. It specifies that contemporary Fiji Hindi to be used. The constitution states, “*Conversational and contemporary iTaukei and Fiji Hindi languages shall be taught as compulsory subjects in all primary schools*” (Sec 31(23)). It is understood that the citizens will use it to converse with each other for everyday use. Especially after the political upheaval in 1987, 2000 and 2006, conversational Hindi is a collaborative tool between the two major races in Fiji. During the conversational lesson in schools, the Indo-Fijian students learn conversational Vosa Vakaviti (Fijian) and the iTaukei students learn Hindi. The term ‘contemporary’ in the 2013 Constitution has created an argument amongst the Fijian citizens. The synonymous for the word ‘contemporary’ is current, modern, present-day, present-time and recent. This led to people believing that the current Hindi prevalent in Fiji is Fiji Hindi and should be taught in schools in Fiji.

#### 1.3.2 Education Commission Report 2000

The Education Commission Report 2000 highlighted that conversational language must be used as a social tool to foster multiculturalism and Standard Hindi be kept. However, there were some submissions made to recognise Fiji Hindi. There was a submission for Fiji Hindi to be recognised and promoted as a viable and legitimate language (Government of Fiji, 2000). The 2000 Education Commission Report highlighted Indo-Fijian educational organisations’ intention to preserve religious and linguistic traditions. Perhaps, as twenty-one years has elapsed since the last education commission, it would be interesting to know whether these organisations have the same motive and the freedom or right to maintain that.

#### 1.3.3 Fiji National Curriculum Framework

The Fiji National Curriculum Framework (FNCF) is aligned to the guiding document, *Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress*. The focus is on Pillar 9, which emphasises ‘*Making Fiji a knowledge-based society*’ (Government of Fiji, 2008). This is attributed to the belief that an educated society will help Fiji recover economically after the political upheavals of 1987, 2000 and 2006. FNCF was also developed to ensure that the Fijian students get quality education and master skills and competencies for success. For language teaching, learning and assessment, FNCF has focussed and ensured that our schools depending on their characteristics, with other languages such as English, Vosa Vakaviti, Rotuman, Urdu, Mandarin and French, teach Hindi.

### *1.3.4 Language Policy*

In 2011, the Ministry of Education, Heritage, and Arts (MEHA) conducted a survey to determine teacher's levels of acquiescence with MEHA's language policy. Three aspects of the language policy were highlighted by the Permanent Secretary for Education. One of the most important was teaching, learning, and assessing vernacular languages like Hindi, Fijian, Rotuman, and Banaban. This was primarily for students in the lower primary grades (Lal, 2011). Comments made by Fiji's former Prime Minister and Permanent Secretary at various educational institutions highlighted the lack of a standard policy or, at the very least, a procedure for determining the teaching and learning of multiple languages (Government of Fiji, 2013). However, language policy is still in the draft stage in Fiji. According to the Government of Fiji (2000), many countries lack formal language policies. As a result, the majority of decisions about teaching, learning, and assessment are based on the "will" of the teachers and institutions. As a result, the language is somewhat unsupported.

### *1.3.5 National Development Plan (NDP) 2017-2036*

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2017–2036 emphasises language education in schools. In this plan, the use of Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi is not precise. The NDP contends that Fiji has a rich cultural and historical heritage that must be preserved. It supports that languages must be conserved (Ministry of Economy, 2017). As a result, language teaching and assessment initiatives are ad hoc and lack stakeholder participation. It also lacks political will as well as expert guidance.

## **2. Purpose of the Study**

Since there has been much debate on the use of Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi in Fijian primary schools, this study sought to investigate the views of the major stakeholders in implementing Fiji Hindi to replace the Standard Hindi currently used in primary school curriculum in Fiji.

### *2.1 Research Questions*

In order to gain a good understanding of the use and sustainability of Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi, three key research questions guided the study:

1. What is your preference between Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi in different social settings?
2. What is your preference between Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi for educational purposes?
3. Which mode (Fiji Hindi or Standard Hindi) do you think must be exceptionally preserved and why?

## **3. Methods**

### *3.1 Participants*

The participants in this research study were purposefully selected. A former Head of School, a Standard Hindi advocate, and a Fiji Hindi advocate were identified for three

interviews, while ninety-four participants who completed the questionnaires represented Heads of Schools, teachers, and community members. They were all from the Ba and Lautoka districts, which fall within the Western division of Fiji. The community members included people from both the Hindu and Christian faith-based denominations who were well versed in Hindi.

### 3.2 Instruments

Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data collection took place between August and September 2020. An interview guide was prepared in order to make the ideal use of the agreed interview time. We piloted the interview with two community members who were not part of the study. The feedback from the pilot testing provided further editing guidance, such as potential prompts for the interviews. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, two interviews were conducted over the phone, and one was done face-to-face. The interviews, which lasted between 7 and 12 minutes, were conducted in Hindi and recorded. We ourselves converted the recorded interviews to English and transcribed them verbatim. Within two weeks of initial data collection, each transcribed interview was read and explained to the participants over the phone to clarify any doubts or make any adjustments to the transcript.

Once initially prepared, to test the effectiveness of the questionnaires, we piloted them with five people who were not part of the study. The pilot test assisted us in rephrasing some questions to ensure that the fundamentals were not overlooked. The 100 participants were chosen at random from urban, suburban, and rural areas. Before distributing the questionnaire, we sought approval and consent from participants. Efforts were made to ensure that Hindi speakers of the Hindu and Christian faiths were included. We contacted the participants via phone and in-person visits. Following the selection of individuals, we informed them of the questionnaire distribution, feedback procedure, and completion timeframe. We emailed sixty questionnaires and hand-delivered forty to participants. We requested that the questionnaire be collected after two weeks and that email responses be provided within a week. We reminded participants via email whenever there was a delay. A total of 94 responses were completed and returned. Table 1 contains a summary of participant questionnaire responses.

**Table 1.** Summary of participant type and responses

Study group	Participants	Responses	Percentage Response	Percentage in relation to total responses
Parents	30	29	97%	30.90%
Teachers	30	28	98%	29.80%
Heads of Schools	10	10	100%	10.60%
Sanatan Community members	15	15	100%	16.00%
Christian Community members	15	12	80%	12.80%
Total	100	94		

## 4. Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, we used descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages, while for qualitative data analysis, a six-phase guide was used to sort the data into themes. The process included: (1) familiarisation of data, (2) generating codes, (3) identifying themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining themes, and (6) writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Campbell, Quincey, Osserman & Pedersen, 2013).

### 4.1 Findings of the study

The data analysis resulted in findings to explain the use and preference for Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi in social and educational settings. Three major themes were identified. These include: (1). Participant preference of Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi in social settings (2). Preference of Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi for Teaching-Learning purposes, and (3). Concern for language sustainability. Each of the three major themes is examined and discussed in greater detail below.

#### 4.1.1 Participant preference of Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi in social settings

The use of Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi differs amongst the social settings where it is practised. Fiji Hindi, regarded as the mother tongue of the Indo-Fijians, is commonly used in communications that require informal communication with family and friends and during marketing. The study also shows that Fiji Hindi is a preferred conversational tool in multicultural and multiracial community settings like Fiji. *“Speaking to each other and understanding each other is easier, and our multiracial brothers and sisters can communicate with us better through Fiji Hindi (Participant 14).* Fiji Hindi is also viewed as a tool to ‘bridge the divide’ between the two major races in Fiji. *“My iTaukei friends easily understand me if I speak in Fiji Hindi with them. We are confident in conversing with each other using Fiji-Hindi” (Participant 6).*

Standard Hindi is considered ideal when performing prayers at homes and temples, singing hymns and bhajan (*a devotional song*), studying at school, communicating at the workplace, reading novels, listening to radios, watching movies, listening to music, during religious ceremonies and when performing rituals. The participants’ preference for Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi is shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Language used by the participants

Particulars	Standard Hindi		Fiji Hindi	
		Percentage		Percentage
Communication with family members	2	2%	92	98%
Communication with friends	2	2%	92	100%
Marketing in town/city	2	2%	92	100%
Praying at home and temple	83	88%	11	12%
Singing hymns, bhajan	91	97%	3	3%
Studying in school	85	90%	19	10%
At workplace	69	73%	25	27%
Reading novels	14	15%	0	0%

Listening radio	58	62%	39	32%
Watching movie	94	100%	0	0%
Listening to music	92	100%	0	0%
Religious ceremonies/rituals	90	96%	4	4%

#### 4.1.2 Preference of Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi for Teaching-Learning purposes.

The majority of the participants prefer that Standard Hindi be used for teaching-learning and assessment purposes in primary schools in Fiji. This is reflected in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Preference

Preference	No. of participants in favour	Percentage of participants in favour
Standard Hindi only	84	89%
Fiji Hindi only	10	11%

The majority of the participants are convinced that Standard Hindi is an official language in Fiji and should continue to be used for teaching, learning and assessment purposes in schools. On the other hand, while Fiji Hindi is considered an informal aspect of language, its position in schools that offer formal education is not considered. A participant commented:

...when teaching Hindi, teachers should specifically use Standard Hindi to set expectations for proper language use. Teaching formal language will allow students to be successful in all fields. They must learn to read and write Standard Hindi (Participant 25).

As Fiji Hindi is considered casual, it is well used for communication purposes, especially in social media. One interviewee commented: *When I text messages to my friends and relatives, I use Fiji Hindi (Interviewee 2)*. Another participant responded by commenting that *Fiji Hindi is easy to write using Roman script; hence reading is easy for others (Participant 76)*

About three-quarters (74%) of the participants feel that Standard Hindi is a structured and a recognised language. Due recognition is given to its structure, grammar, meaningfulness and clarity. One of the participants remarked:

Standard Hindi is well structured. There are grammar rules, phrases to add more meaning to sentences, and idioms and proverbs. Standard Hindi has clarity in language and avoids ambiguity. It is phonetic, concrete and meaningful (Participant 52)

The majority of the participants (n=79) claim that Fiji Hindi does not have a structure. There are no grammar and tense rules, and gender determination is ignored in spoken language. There is a lack of originality, and it keeps changing. Fiji Hindi cannot be used in any formal program because it lacks aesthetic value, is informal and does not suit public speaking. An interviewee remarked:

Fiji Hindi is a mixture of Hindi, English and Fijian languages and lacks its original script. It keeps changing, and its vocabulary changes too (Participant 63).

Interestingly, in comparison to Standard Hindi, most respondents (n=66) stated that Fiji Hindi is challenging to read and understand. *“Knowing the basic Hindi alphabets and reading*

*Standard Hindi is simple. As you say, you write.*” (Interviewee 1). However, some respondents stated that Standard Hindi is difficult (n=10). The study further showed that Fiji Hindi was incorporated in the 2015 curriculum and was tested in the external examinations in Years 6, 7 and 8. An interviewee added, *“It was a real challenge. Being a HoS in one of the primary schools in Fiji, the experience was unpleasant. The external examination papers were challenging for students (Interviewee 1)*

#### 4.1.3 Concern for language sustainability

The results revealed that in order to read Hindu religious scriptures, Standard Hindi is vital. The majority of the participants (n=51) remarked that Standard Hindi has linkages to their religious books as various resources are available locally and globally in Standard Hindi. Moreover, ninety-two percent (n= 80) of the participants who favoured Standard Hindi alluded that it is connected to culture.

Standard Hindi is the cornerstone of literature. It helps us to read religious books and understand the ‘vedas’, ‘purans’ and ‘upanishads’. It is vital that one learns Standard Hindi. Standard Hindi gives us cultural belonging (Interviewee 3).

The participants also felt that religious values and cultural identity would be at risk if Fiji Hindi is recognised and taught in schools.

There are hardly any resources available in Fiji Hindi, and our culture will diminish if this is used (Participant 2).

There will be loss of cultural and religious values as people will be unable to read and comprehend the cultural books and texts (Participant 68).

Standard Hindi is also favoured for recreational activities. The majority of the participants (n=59) prefer Standard Hindi for entertainment purposes. This is due to the music, television serials, movies, songs in albums, and books in Standard Hindi languages. One participant stated that there are fewer entertainment avenues in Fiji Hindi (Participant 43), while another participant commented that music composed using Standard Hindi is pleasant to the ears (Participant 50).

On the contrary, the minority of the participants feel that Fiji Hindi is a source of entertainment as few short movies are made by individuals or some songs are created for entertainment purposes. Additionally, the participants revealed that local songs have the words of other Fiji languages like English and i-Taukei. One of the interviewees expressed,

Fiji Hindi songs are uncultured and sometimes rated. It needs to grow in-depth to give meaning and be accepted (Participant 1).

The participants believe that Fiji Hindi forms a common basis as it is connected to their birthplace and to their parents and grandparents birthplace. *I was born in Fiji, and Fiji Hindi is my language (Participant 56)*. Another respondent stated *Fiji is where I belong, and Fiji Hindi is my identity. I am confident that it connects me to my motherland and my relations”*. (Participant 29)

Standard Hindi provides a broader career path. Fifty-seven percent (n= 54) stated that if students learn Standard Hindi, they can get better jobs as news reporters, radio announcers,

teachers and movie directors. On the contrary, Fiji Hindi limits people to work within their own nation. These are evident in the following responses:

Learning Standard Hindi will help me get jobs like news reporter, radio announcer, teacher and movie director. You can work as an interpreter in the Judiciary as well (Participant 6).

Fiji-Hindi is not a standard and recognised language in the world, so for people wanting to make a career in this field (Fiji-Hindi) their work opportunities will be limited to Fiji only-with no scope for work in foreign countries (Participant 11).

## 5. Discussion

The findings revealed that Fiji Hindi does not have a structure, lacks grammar and tense rules, ignores gender determination, and keeps changing while being used in communications that require informal communication with family and friends and during marketing. It was also revealed that Fiji Hindi could not be used in any formal program because it lacks aesthetic value, is informal and does not suit public speaking. The findings corroborate with Hopf, McLeod and McDonagh (2017), where they found that Indo-Fijians widely speak Fiji Hindi and it is prevalent in their homes; Shameem (2005), who found that Fiji Hindi is a pre-literate language and uses a lot of English and iTaukei words; and Mangubhai and Mugler (2003), who found that Fiji Hindi is a non-standardised local language. The study also supports the findings of Subramani (2000), which stated that Fiji Hindi emerged to counter the communication difficulties; and Kachru (1986) which states that Fiji Hindi has an extensive vocabulary that is taken from English, and therefore, sometimes a word may have more than one interpretive meaning.

Standard Hindi is considered ideal when performing prayers at homes and temples, singing hymns and bhajan, studying at school, communicating at the workplace, reading novels, listening to radios, watching movies, listening to music, during religious ceremonies and when performing rituals. This is consistent with the findings of Shameem (1995) and Siegel (1992), which state that while Fiji Hindi has strong ties to Girit and strongly identifies the Indo Fijian, it has low status within and outside the community where it is spoken and is never used for formal purposes. Fiji Hindi is also not very popular on cultural and religious occasions, so Standard Hindi is used. This is also supported by Meena (2017), who states that Standard Hindi helps in smooth communication and interaction without hindrance and clusters all languages and dialects under one language.

The findings further revealed that Standard Hindi ‘bridges the gap’ between various Hindi dialects in Fiji, is globally recognised, and its continuity in the teaching-learning and assessment in primary schools would strengthen Standard Hindi. The findings further revealed a vast difference in participant opinions regarding the use of Standard Hindi and Fiji Hindi. The preferred conversational mode is Fiji Hindi, whereas there is overwhelming support for Standard Hindi for teaching-learning and assessment in schools. This is consistent with the study conducted by Narayan (2018), which found that strategies must be adopted to retain the essence of Standard Hindi for future generations as it is still part of the curriculum. However, it is contrary to the results of Lagi (2016), which found that Standard Hindi is difficult. This difference could be attributed to the experiences the participants have gone

through during their schooling, at home, and as community members. This could also be due to the role they played in the community; as HoS, teachers, religious leaders, and parents.

The findings further revealed the challenges in implementing Fiji Hindi in the teaching-learning process. The overwhelming challenges in terms of available texts and literature, curriculum and language difficulties in writing and the selected script are evident. The dialect forms of Fiji Hindi compound this. This is similar to Prakash's (2003) study, which showed that Fiji Hindi literacy works are not well known among Indo-Fijians and are extremely difficult to understand. The findings are similar to those of Pillai (1975) and Siegel (1987), which found that Fiji Hindi is not officially coded and suggested coding the language using a roman script.

## 6. Conclusion

Different views exist on Fiji Hindi and Standard Hindi in the communities and primary schools in Fiji. The study found that in Standard Hindi, due recognition is given to the structure, grammar, meaningfulness, and clarity of the language. The study also revealed that Standard Hindi has extensive literature and entertainment for many Indo-Fijians, provides many job opportunities and is used globally. On the contrary, Fiji Hindi is widely used during informal conversations and is a powerful tool to unite people of different races in multicultural settings like Fiji.

Standard Hindi is considered ideal when performing prayers at homes and temples, singing hymns and bhajan, communicating at the workplace, reading novels, listening to radios, watching movies, listening to music, during religious ceremonies and when performing rituals. Standard Hindi is also considered ideal in educational settings.

While this study was conducted with a smaller sample and in one particular geographical location, it would be ideal to conduct this study on a larger scale. More work also needs to be done towards legal procedures, planning and curriculum development for a heightened level of language development in Fiji. It is highly recommended that Standard Hindi be continued as the mode of instruction for the teaching-learning and assessment of Hindi for Indo-Fijian students in Fijian primary schools. Fiji Hindi should continue as the Fiji 'baat' and remain a conversational language. While both the language aspects have their strengths and limitations, the challenges of Fiji Hindi outweigh its strengths. Fiji Hindi needs to develop its distinctive features to be regarded as a complete language. Many challenges must be met so that Fiji Hindi can be included in the curriculum and be recognised and accepted by the Indo-Fijians. There is also a need for broader consultation and surveys before changes are made to the curriculum and policies.

This research will benefit the policy-makers and the curriculum developers at Curriculum Advisory Services, Fiji, to develop and strengthen the curriculum in Fiji. Furthermore, it will benefit MEHA in planning for language teaching and assessment in primary schools in Fiji. This research will help teachers who are curriculum implementers as well as religious organisations that use Standard Hindi. The findings will encourage more scholars to research the languages used in Fiji.

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#### **AUTHOR BIODATA**

**Bimal Avinesh Chand** is a Postgraduate Scholar at School of Education, Fiji National University, Lautoka, Fiji

**Satish Prakash Chand** is an Assistant Professor in Education, School of Education, Fiji National University, Lautoka, Fiji.