

Girmitiyas Globally

An International Conference

8-10 October, 2025, Nadi, Fiji.

Introduction:

'Girmitiyas', referring to all those who can trace their ancestry back to the Indian Indenture System (1834-1921), are estimated to number between 12-15 million worldwide, although no confirmed figures exist. These individuals, who now reside in nearly every country in the world, are bound together by a shared history.

While academic research on Girmit and Girmitiyas dates back to the 1930s, it wasn't until the last decade that interest and prominence in the subject began to rise.

In 2017, the 100th anniversary of the end of indenture was commemorated globally, marking a turning point in the field. Since then, the number of conference papers, articles, books, and monographs on the topic has significantly increased, with two high-quality international academic journals also being launched in 2021 – the UK based Ameena Gafoor Institute's *Journal of Indentureship and its Legacies* in 2021, and *Indenture Papers: Studies on Girmitiyas* (<https://girmit.ac.fj/>), a journal by a consortium of six institutions, including the Global Girmit Institute, the University of the South Pacific, NCIC-Heritage Centre, IIT Patna, BHU, and Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

In Mauritius, following the *Slave Route Project*, UNESCO paid tribute to the 1.2 million displaced Girmitiyas through the endorsement of the *Indentured Labour Routes Project*. The ILRP has major projects focused on documenting, researching, and writing about Girmitiyas.

In light of the growing interest in Girmit and Girmitiyas, this transdisciplinary Conference will focus on updates on research and publication on Girmitiyas, past and present.

Objective

The primary objective of the conference is to facilitate discourse on all aspects related to documenting, researching, writing and communicating the histories and lives of Girmitiyas. The conference aims to create a dialogue between scholars from different disciplines on the themes listed below.

Core Themes

The following core themes are suggested:

- Core Theme 1:** Academic Research on Indenture
- Core Theme 2:** Documenting families and family histories
- Core Theme 3:** Girmitiya Fiction
- Core Theme 4:** Indenture Database
- Core Theme 5:** Music, Dance, Drama, Movies, Languages
- Core Theme 6:** General – Other papers related to Girmitiyas
- Core Theme 7:** Binding Themes – Identity formation and Significance of Girmitiya Identity(ies), and Sustaining Girmitiya Identities.

Parallel Event

During the Conference, a major parallel event on **Ramayan and Hindi, and their roles in identity definition in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious setting**, would also take place. These events would also have related photo and electronic exhibitions. The event will culminate in 2 evening performances.

Presentation Format

- Posters
- Full Presentation sessions (length: 15 mins)
- Student presentation sessions (length: 10 mins)
- Lunchtime lightening sessions (length: 5 mins)
- Films - Screened parallelly.
- Art - displayed in conference gallery
- Drama - performances in evenings.

For academic papers: Preference is for papers to be circulated to participants on the first day of the Conference, and presentations to be largely interactive.

Language: English, except for Ramayan and Hindi session, and papers which are on languages.

Who Should Attend?: All researchers, writers and activists whose interest is on Girmityas and/or on research, publication and production of expressive arts materials.

Academic Paper Submission

Abstract details: Word limit for abstracts - no more than 300 words, including keywords. Abstracts must include the proposed title of the paper, author full name(s), address(es) and email address(es) of all authors. Authors are encouraged to indicate the session in which they wish their paper to be placed. The final decision on paper placement shall be that of the Conference Convener.

File type: Word for Windows.

Full paper: This is required for papers whose abstracts are accepted. Selected papers shall be published in our journal *Indenture Papers: Studies on Girmityas* or *Fijian Studies: A Journal of Contemporary Fiji..* There is no word limit for the papers, but papers must be of publishable standard. Those not able to submit full papers, but whose abstracts have been accepted can still make presentations at the conference as long as they are registered; these authors will need to make their own arrangements for copying and circulating their speaking notes, ppts or completed papers.

Abstract and Paper Reviews: A selection panel shall assess all abstracts received and advise authors of the outcomes. The key criteria would be relevance to the theme of the Conference. All final papers shall be blind reviewed to ensure standards.

Submission Address: girmit.conference@gmail.com. An electronic submission board is available at: <https://girmit.ac.fj/registration-2025/>

Film, Art, Drama Proposal Submission

Proposal details: Submittees should provide an abstract of the activity they propose in no more than 300 words. Details to be included are: (a) creator (s); (b) copyrights, (c) censor details (if films), (d) formats, and (e) equipment, etc., requirements if accepted for the conference.

Important Dates:

The following are the critical dates (these are the last dates; earlier submission is preferred):

1. Submission of Abstract: 15 September 2025
2. Notification of acceptance: 2 weeks from submission
3. Full paper submission: 30 September 2025
4. Early Registration: 1 September 2025
5. Late Registration: 8 October 2025
6. Daily Registration: 8 October, 9 October, 10 October 2025

Social Events

Conference Dinner: 8 October 2025

Networking Dinner: 9 October 2025

Related Events: 11 & 12 October 2025: Excursions (self-funded).

Registration Fee:

- Pacific Island, Giritiya Country Residents/India/Third World Residents: \$F50 (USD25)
- Other Residents: \$F200 (USD100)
- Students, Unemployed, Retired: \$F5 per day
- Observers from Pacific Island, Third World Residents: \$F50
- Observers - First World Residents: \$F100
- Day Rates: \$F40 (excludes dinners and transfers)
- All participants must register.

[Full Registration Fee allows for conference materials, session fees, cocktail, and all teas and dinners. (The rates are subsidised by sponsors).]*

Logistics

The conference venue, Nadi, is a 15-minute drive from the Nadi International Airport.

Organisers shall arrange special transportation for overseas participants.

Travel

Fiji is well serviced with international flights. Airlines which fly to Fiji include: Aircalin, Air Kiribati, Air New Zealand, Air Vanuatu, Jetstar, Korean Air, Virgin Australia, Fiji Airways, Qantas, Air Niugini, Solomon Airlines, United Airlines (code share with Air New Zealand). There are multiple flights a day from Australia, New Zealand and the US. Fiji Airways also flies to Singapore and Hongkong. Korean Airlines flies to Fiji from Seoul twice a week. Air Niugini, Vanuatu Air and Solomon Airlines fly to Fiji from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Other countries in the Pacific are serviced by Fiji Airways and a number of regional airlines.

Conference Committee

Conference Convener: Dr. Ganesh Chand, Global Girit Institute (GGI)

Conference Organising Secretary: Mr. Satya Shandil, Deputy Director, Pacific Polytech.

Conference Advisory Committee:

Dr. Subhash Appana, Fiji
Dr. Sofia Ali, Fiji
Mr. Mohammed Faruk, Fiji
Mr. Jainesh Shandil, Fiji
Ms Pratishma Devi, Fiji
Mr. Jone Dakuvula, Fiji
Ms. Bhavika Naidu, Fiji
Dr. Primnath Gooptar, Trinidad & Tobago
Professor Bhugwan Singh, South Africa
Mr. Satyendra Peerthum. Mauritius
Dr. Vishnu Bisram, New York
Dr. Farzana Gounder, New Zealand
Mr. Satya Dutt, New Zealand
Dr. Amba Pande, India.
Dr. Ramchandra Joshi, India

Conference Contact Details:

Chief Convener: globalgiritinstitute@gmail.com: (679) 9955709

Organising Secretary: snshandil@gmail.com @gmail.com ; mobile: 9353369

Office: Global Girit Institute, Saweni Shopping Centre, Queens Road, Lautoka

Website: <http://girit.ac.fj/> www.globalgiritinstitute.org

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/fijigirit/?fref=ts>

Financial Support: Limited funds are available for partial financial support for travel and/or accommodation for international and local participants. The extent of support depends on financial sponsorship secured by the date of conference, and the submission of quality papers.

Primary Sponsors: Global Girit Institute, Pacific Polytech, High Commission of India.

