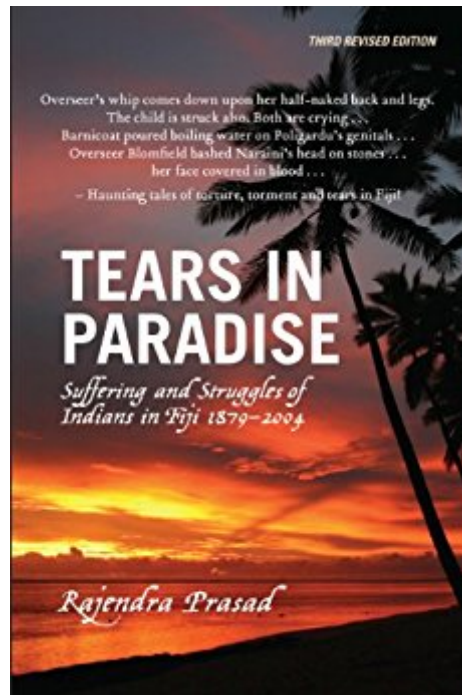




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Tears In Paradise: Suffering And Struggles Of Indians In Fiji 1879-2004



Synopsis

"Tears in Paradise – Suffering and Struggles of Indians in Fiji 1879-2004" reveals the horrific treatment of Indian indentured workers (Girmitiyas) in Fiji by the British from 1879-1919. Indenture system (Girmit) under which they were recruited was slavery by another name. Working and living conditions were so atrocious that Fiji had the highest rate of suicide in the world and highest rate of infanticide among the colonies that deployed indentured labour. Author, Rajendra Prasad, a descendant of Girmitiya grandparents, graphically captures the suffering, struggles and sacrifices of the pioneer generation, "Overseer's whip comes down upon her half-naked back and legs. The child is struck also. Both are crying. Barnicoat poured boiling water on Poligardu's genitals. Blomfield bashed Naraini's head on stones. her face covered in blood...". The British had recruited 60,965 Indians to work in the sugarcane plantations in Fiji. Deceit and deception was widely used in the recruitment process to trap the innocent, poor and ignorant peasants for countries they never knew or dreamt of going. It tore their hearts when they realized that it was separation from their motherland. In 1882 when ships Berar and Poonah I set sail for Fiji, fifteen recruits jumped overboard and drowned. In the ships, many fell sick and some died of homesickness. In the fields, they worked for long hours and ritually suffered whips, kicks and sticks of the white Overseers. Women in advanced stage of pregnancy were forced to work. Some gave birth in the fields and most were required to return to work within days of child birth. The rigors of plantation life changed their demeanour. Methodist missionary, Hannah Dudley, in her letter to the Indian leaders on November 4, 1912, asked for the abolition of the indenture system. She wrote, "I shall never forget the first time I saw indentured women. They were returning from their day's work. The look on those women's faces haunts me". The second part of the book captures the contemporary history of Fiji under the theme "An Uncertain Future", echoing racial discrimination and marginalization of Indo-Fijians by successive Governments, as anxiety and insecurity about their future kept them on the edge. Tears in Paradise eloquently captures the gruesome events - suffering that will haunt, endurance that will challenge, violence that will confound and struggle that will inspire. One reader wrote, "Once in my hand, I could not put it down and cried at several places. It eloquently brought out the human element often missing in other historical publications on the subject."

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Customer Reviews

It is a must read book. Its about the journey of Indians from India to Fiji and how Indians were lied, betrayed and taken against there will. I loved reading this book and recommend this book to everyone who like reading.

This book gave me glimpse of what my great grandfather experienced. A must read for anyone interested in knowing more about their heritage.

Always wanted a copy of my ancestral history... the Girmit Script of my ancestors. I have read every word with so much emotion, tears, pride and love held me tight. Will be reading it again and again. Thanks to Mr Rajendra Prasad for his efforts in putting this amazing book.

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