

Understanding women and their spaces:

A Fijian Experience in the 21st Century

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Abstract

This research looks at ethnic Fijian women and their spaces in economic, social and political action. The rationale for the research was to inquire into whether itaukei women were valued in their society and/or narratives. Furthermore, the research inquires into whether there were naturally existing platforms and systems at different levels that enable even the ‘commoner’ (woman) to have a voice and be heard, to make decisions and be respected, to own land and carry out development projects individually or with others.

The research employed the ‘appreciative inquiry’ methodology for its harmony with FRIEND’s integrated approach to community development. It adopted the approach that western concepts of gender and development and the community of nations’ (including Fiji) ratification of related ‘rights’, have contributed to a paradigm shift in indigenous women’s spaces from relational to individualism. Qualitative data was collected from primary and secondary sources.

As this research shows, women have by tradition been equal partners with their men until the 19th century British colonial indirect rule came into play, compounded by modern day western concept of woman as victim. However, despite their challenges, women remain the lifeblood of the *vanua*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This research report, commissioned by the Foundation for Rural Integration, Enterprises and Development (FRIEND), is about indigenous Fijian women and their spaces in economic, social and political action;
- It is an account of the finding on the hypothesis; “*itaukei* women are valued in their society and/or narratives. There are naturally existing platforms and systems at different levels that enable even the ‘commoner’ (woman) to have a voice and be heard, to make decisions and be respected, to own land and carry out development projects individually or with others.”
- The research adopted the ‘appreciative inquiry’ methodology for its harmony with FRIEND’s integrated approach to community development;
- Approaches to this research include: Western concepts of gender and development and the community of nations’ (including Fiji) ratification of related ‘Rights’, have contributed to a paradigm shift in indigenous women’s spaces from relational to individualism;
- Using the medium of focus group discussions and individual interviews, qualitative data was collected from Ba villages and settlements as the primary respondents. Information was also obtained from other parts of Fiji. The respondents included Fijians of Indian ethnicity for some comparability;
- In summary, the response to the research objectives illustrates:
 1. *Itaukei* tradition honoured women for their role in birthing, nurturing and death in the human cycle. In a nutshell, women were the bloodline of the *vanua*;
 2. Customary practices in *itaukei* society therefore reveal that by tradition, women and men shared complementary roles and responsibilities to sustain the economic, political and social life of the *vanua*. For example, men minded the children while women cooked. Women also negotiated and participated in trade transactions. Women were skilled warriors and seafarers too;
 3. Over time, development issues like migration, misinterpretation of Christian principles, colonisation, urbanisation and other contributory factors like the western approach to women’s rights as an isolated individual need has diluted a God-like belief system which religiously upheld that women were equal to men;
 4. Ironically, a modified local government structure that has its origin in the British colonial’s indirect rule is primarily responsible for their ability to sustain platforms where women are necessary components within the life of a *vanua*;
 5. There are however certain age-old customary practices that remain which suggest the female is equally precious to the male in the life cycle of the *itaukei*.
 6. The female new born baby, is given equal space to the male baby, when their umbilical cord stumps are planted. The significance of this act, is that the child will grow up to live in harmony with nature. In return, nature will sustain the child into adulthood and beyond;
 7. Furthermore, for every stage of the female’s development, there is a celebration; for birth, menstruation, courting, marriage, childbirth and even in death.
 8. Even in the *itaukei* food culture, men and women practise specific roles in food preparation for certain delicacies (exclusive to their clan or tribe) for their respective expertise and not because of gender;
 9. Women are equal landowners (to men) by virtue of their birth to a landowning unit, regardless of whether they are chiefs or not;

10. Women contribute to decision making within a *vanua* because of their leadership role in the clan, tribe, and/or a province including the Government's local government structure for the *itaukei*;
11. In addition, there is the women's role of mentoring, supporting and cooperation to sustain a society and build peace;
12. Similarly, Indo-Fijian women were equally valued in their communities. However, they did not have the parentage of a local government system which allowed them liberty to manage their own affairs without interference from the government;

In addition, women living in settlements, regardless of their ethnicity, found spaces, (whether as members of a religious or interest group) through which to articulate and actualise their issues of concern;

Recommendations include;

- Space to be allocated for *talanoa* sessions on human rights issues as not new but already embedded within customary practices, some of which continue to be practised. Given the alarming record of *itaukei* as main perpetrators for rape and serious sexual offences, particularly on women and children, this will help curb this evil;
- Space to be allocated for *talanoa* sessions on customary practices in *itaukei* society which recognise the special role of women and their contribution to social cohesion;
- Space to be allocated for *talanoa* sessions on fostering understanding to better equip men and women in their political and socio-economic roles to strengthen engagement with each other and, government officials;
- In collaboration with the relevant government agencies, awareness is raised on Fiji's dual local government system and how they could be accessed by the people, especially women as participants in the available spaces for civil society within the functional structures of provincial boards and divisional boards under the respective four divisional (central, eastern, northern and western) Commissioners at the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development. These boards (provincial and divisional) enable civil society to contribute to decision making in formulation of government policies and national budgetary development. They are also ideal preparatory platforms for women who might want to enter politics;

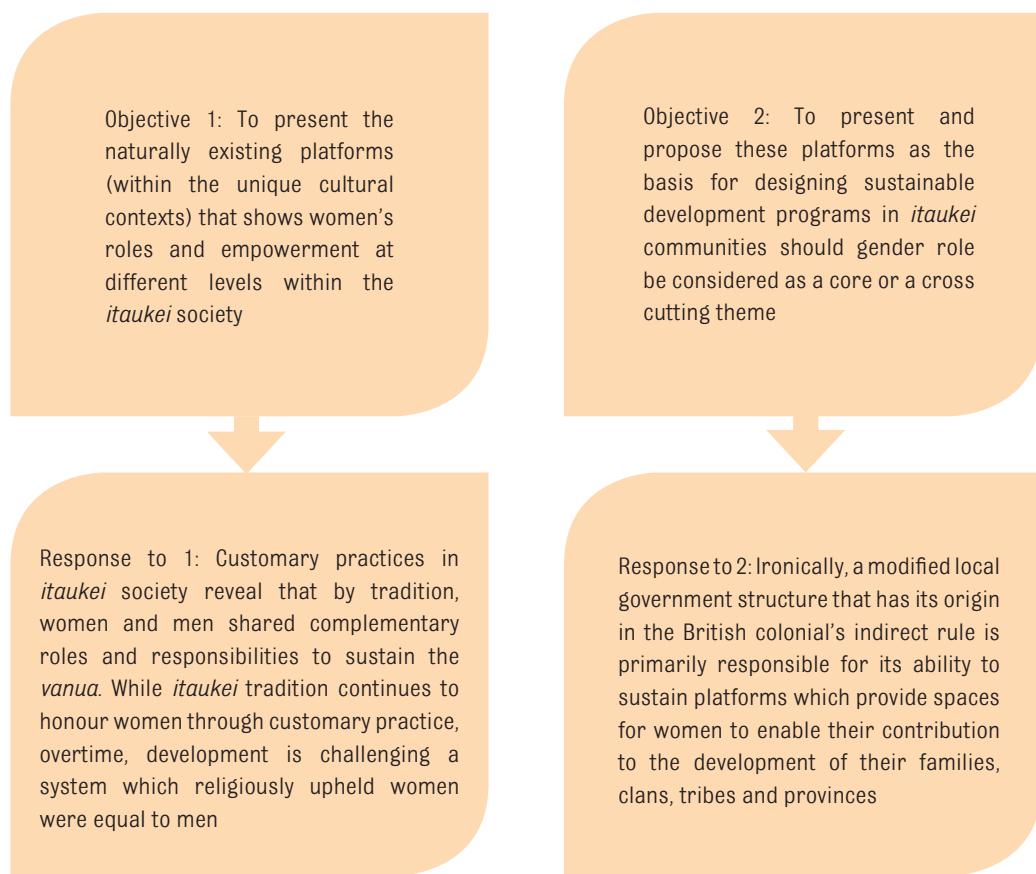
FRIEND propagates its programme on gender roles, through either of the following avenues, wherever practical: traditional governance system, local government system, religious groups and/or other interest group.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“..We are not feminists who are coming in with a need and the mindset to be empowered. No! Our society empowers us to be who we are in our God given role as nurturers, and also our supportive role within our families and mataqali...” “. (Losalini Tugia, Lautoka, January 2018)

In 2016³, the United Nation's Resident Coordinator blamed an ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework for the Pacific's record of high prevalence of violence against women. The UN's own admission for failure might suggest it is time for international organisations and western developed nations to change the lens they use for women in development. Perhaps now might be a good time to remind international organisations and western developed nations that more than ten years ago, or probably earlier, women from the Southern Hemisphere already felt that 'rights-based development' was just the latest Western paradigm being imposed on them. Because its bias towards individual choice actually undermines community development imperatives⁴.

This report is primarily about Fijian ethnic women, the *itaukei*, and their spaces in economic, social and political action. It is an account of the finding on the hypothesis; *itaukei* women are valued in their society and/or narratives. There are naturally existing platforms and systems at different levels that enable even the 'commoner' (woman) to have a voice and be heard, to make decisions and be respected, to own land and carry out development projects individually or with others. Furthermore, translated to the following two objectives and summarised responses: Figure 1: Objectives and Responses 1 and 2 (summarised):



³ On 13th August 2016, the Pacific's Seventh Regional Network Meeting was told by Osnat Lubrani, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative.

⁴ Refer Kerr 2004:25

The research project is commissioned by the Foundation for Rural Integration, Enterprises and Development (FRIEND), a Fijian national development non-government organisation (NGO)⁵. FRIEND has been tackling social, economic and health challenges in communities around Fiji since 2001, in realising its mission to alleviate all forms of poverty by using integrated holistic approaches. This project is supported by the European Union (EU).

1.1 Context – literature review

In order to contextualise the backdrop against which an indigenous society must grapple with the onslaught of modern development and its impact on women, it is necessary to present the following literature review limited only to a few sources.

1.1.1 The Waves of Feminism

According to American historian, Martha Rampton, there are four waves of feminism^{6,7}. While it is common to speak of three phases of modern feminism; there is no general agreement on what to do with women's movements before the late 19th century. Although Walters (2005:3) explained that some of the first European women to speak out for themselves and for their sex did so within a religious framework and in religious terms. By the 16th century, an increasing number of women were beginning to argue their case more consistently and more aggressively though still within a religious framework. The Reformation enabled more women to receive an education. So Rampton's interpretation, while limited only to America, appears to speak for the western world in saying that the first wave of feminism began in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. This was the era of industrialisation, urbanisation and liberal, socialist politics. The goal of this wave was to give women the political right to vote. The second phase which began in the 1960s and continued till the 1990s unfolded in the context of the anti-war and civil rights movements and the growing self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups around the world. According to Rampton, the voice of the second wave was increasingly radical. It attracted women of colour and those from developing nations. It sought sisterhood and solidarity, claiming "women's struggle is class struggle." Feminists spoke of women as a social class and coined phrases such as "the personal is political" and "identity politics" in an effort to illustrate that race, class, and gender exploitation were all related. They introduced a centralised effort to rid society top-to-bottom of sexism, from children's cartoons to the highest levels of government. The third wave of feminism began in the mid-90s and was influenced by post-colonial and post-modern thinking. In this phase many theories were subverted including the ideas of "universal womanhood," body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity. For example, an aspect of third wave feminism that mystified the mothers of the earlier feminist movement was the re-adoption by young feminists of the very lip-stick, high-heels, and cleavage proudly exposed by low cut necklines that the first two phases of the movement identified with male oppression. This new position expressed that it was possible to be beautiful and have a brain at the same time. They stepped onto the stage as strong and empowered. So the third wave refused to be identified as feminists because they found it limiting, preferring instead ambiguity. The fourth wave appears to be still forming into a yet-to-be defined figure.

1.1.2 Feminism an Impasse

Despite Rampton's (2008) claim of a fourth wave still forming, feminism according to author Pauline Johnson (1994) remained an impasse. Johnson said that both the liberation feminism of the 1970s and the more recent feminism of difference were increasingly faced with the limitations of their own perspectives. She observed that while feminists then generally acknowledged the need to recognise diversity, they lacked a coherent framework through which this need could be articulated. In Feminism as Radical Humanism, Pauline Johnson called for a reassessment of feminism's relationship to modern humanism. She argued that

⁵ See friendfiji.com/about-us/...accessed 3/2/18

⁶ Refer <https://www.pacificu.edu/about/media/fourwaves/feminism>. Originally published in 2008. Accessed 21/5/18.

⁷ Professor Rampton is the Director of the Centre for Gender Equity at Pacific University

despite its very thorough and necessary critique of mainstream formulations of humanist ideals, feminism itself remained strongly committed to humanist values. In a similar vein, 10 years later, Kerr (2004:23) noted that; women's movements like so many social movement were largely reactive to a relentless catalogue of discrimination and rights violations related to violence, education, healthcare, reproduction, citizenship and economic well-being, just to name a few. She added that, gender equality advocates in different parts of the world were able to re-direct some gender imbalances. But, their strategies were not effective enough to sustain progress for women.

1.1.3 Some Suggested Solutions

Kerr (2004:23-25) argues for what she calls the 'what' and the 'how' of finding ways to be more strategic and proactive. Amongst which, the recognition of using a rights-based approach over a gender mainstreaming approach as recognised by development practitioners and agencies from Oxfam to UNICEF. Kerr (2004:25-26) adds that the key to the future is to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses in all approaches to gender equality. Interdisciplinary, holistic and collaborative strategies that build on what has worked and are informed by potential risks will be more effective. Furthermore, history shows that when we have defined the problems of women in narrow ways and then attempt to remedy them, using a limited number of tools change is rarely long-term or systematic. Moreover, inevitably, women's movements will have to stop working in thematic and institutional silos. Achieving peace, equality and well-being will require political and economic strategies that build on many different approaches and analyses from human rights, development, political economy, popular education and so on, that are the most appropriate for that context. Kerr (2004:26) anticipates two other important, and paradoxical, trends: decentralisation of decision-making from national to local levels, and at the same time strengthened international institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation, although their policies might oppose those of national governments.

1.1.4 The Fundamental Flaw in Man the Hunter versus Woman the Gatherer

According to Tiffany (1982:13-14) traditional anthropological interpretations of prehistoric and contemporary foraging populations have assumed male dominance. The 'man the hunter' model of foragers emphasises the primacy of male aggression and dominance in organising group relations. According to this model, male supremacy is based on greater physical strength of men, who monopolise hunting skills and weapons and maintain tightly knit male groups necessary for hunting, warfare and defence. Feminist anthropologists however suggest an alternative framework, 'women the gatherer'. This model emphasises contributions of women, and female participation in the political and religious life of their societies. In effect Tiffany (1982:14) added that, women in prehistoric and contemporary foraging systems are positively valued participants and decision-makers, rather than compliant or oppressed breeders. The feminist interpretation of women's roles contrasts sharply with the 'man the hunter' assumption of sex and gender inequality.

2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT: WOMEN IN *Itaukei* SOCIETY

Gender roles in *itaukei* society is synonymous with the feminist view of anthropologist Tiffany (1982:14) in 1.1.4 above. In traditional *itaukei* society, the role and responsibility of a member within the small family unit or the bigger clan and tribal groups, take precedent over whether one is man or woman. Gender therefore is secondary. This belief system is centered in the religion of the ancestors which believed in an unseen God⁸ which is presented as androgynous or, man and woman by Reverend Ilaitia Tuwere's schema (2002:108), suggesting that men and women were created as equals. God was the garden and owned the garden. Hence he/she was the God of growth and fertility. They became mediations of the divine. Tuwere explains (2002:108) that when they do not materialise or the harvest is poor, it is a sign that something is wrong and relationships have to be corrected between people and also between people and God. She is identified with the garden, the life-force of economic life. Her power is centred in the economics of daily life. She is the organiser of the economy of the garden, of the house (Tuwere 2002:109). Furthermore, while the male has easy access to the deity, the female represents the principle of distribution in the myth. In her distribution, she allots the service of the warrior to her male twin. Gender is therefore presented as complementary for cooperation for the common good.

A woman had the freedom to choose her man. But she took responsibility for her choice⁹. While men and women shared domestic duties, women were also leaders, traders, seafarers and warriors. In the absence of men, especially during warfare, the women held the *vanua* together by taking on the political role of their male counterparts as leaders. They continued till their men returned to continue with their role in all spheres of life. Women were also fiercely protective of their custom. When a chief from Bau, who was also an employee of the Colonial administration, referred to a plantain in a toast, a young woman of the hill-tribe was so furious that she inflicted a flesh wound on him for uttering her totem plant. Enraged, the chief filed a report in the provincial court. Fortunately for the young woman, the case was dismissed (Brewster 1922:106-107).

2.1 Implication of Colonial Indirect Rule on Gender in *itaukei* Society

Before mid-19th century, the early Christian missionaries began to interpret the Bible in a manner which pacified a largely volatile native population. Those who embraced Christianity had to dress and behave in a manner imposed on them by the European missionaries. In 1876, Sir Arthur Gordon, Fiji's first British governor after the Deed of Cession (1874), introduced an economic framework. Under a system of indirect rule¹⁰, a conical structure was developed beginning with the Native Council at the tip, chaired by the Governor or his nominee. Followed by the provincial council, then the districts, and then the villages at the bottom strata. Chiefs sympathetic to British colonial rule were employed to actualise this structure. In addition, the customary practice called *lala*, which enables a chief to commission a person or group to perform a particular task was adopted by the Colonial administration to coax cooperation from the people. It was difficult though because, firstly, the modified *lala* did not reciprocate the people for their effort. This was uncustomary. Secondly, the people were offended when the modified *lala* was someone they did not recognise as their chief. Thirdly, the *lala* introduced working groups of men, women and children akin to slavery which the people were not used to. Any retaliation was swiftly dealt with. Effectively, women's place in society was rattled by their adoption of Christianity and the intrusion of indirect rule, both of which by a European order that was largely influenced by a school of thought which according to Tiffany (1982:13-14) portrayed the 'man the hunter' model which emphasised the primary of male aggression and dominance as explained in 1.1.4 above.

8 Interview Archbishop Petero Mataca, 21/9/2011

9 See Brewster 1922:101-104 and Princess in Fiji, Journal of Richard Wyn Koop, arrived in Galoa, 1 June 1840

10 Formalised via Native Ordinance 1876. See Daurewa 2013:9

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The hypothesis for this research project is:

“itaukei women are valued in their society and/or narratives. There are naturally existing platforms and systems at different levels that enable even the ‘commoner’ (woman) to have a voice and be heard, to make decisions and be respected, to own land and carry out development projects individually or with others”

3.1 Research Approach

The research project was undertaken by Alisi Daurewa. She has over 20 years' experience in multi-sectoral development work in Fiji and the Pacific through development assistance work, programme management and project implementation. Her research plan and justification is attached. She adopted the 'appreciative inquiry'¹¹ methodology in line with FRIEND's integrated approach to community development.

This research is about the socio-economic and political rights of indigenous women in the context of development and local governance. It recognises however that indigenous voices do not have an independent platform at UN level from which to articulate their issues. Indigenous issues are instead, diluted under equality and inclusivity in the international community. For example, in constitution-making; indigenous and minority rights are now incorporated in an integrated framework of equality¹².

This research argues that western concepts of gender and development and the community of nations' (including Fiji) ratification of related 'Rights', have contributed to a paradigm shift in indigenous women's spaces from relational to individualism;

The research approach is appreciative inquiry, which includes participatory engagement eg. *talanoa*.

3.2 Research Objectives

Objective 1: To present the existing platforms (within the unique cultural contexts) that show women's roles and empowerment at different levels within *itaukei* society.

Objective 2: To present and propose these platforms as the basis for designing sustainable development programs in *itaukei* communities should gender role be considered as a core or cross cutting theme.

¹² See Daurewa (2016) on Petrova 2010; in CCF's Monitoring of Indigenous Institutions

4.0 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative and primary data were collected via interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. Two experienced researchers with whom the lead researcher had worked in previous consultancy engagements, Losalini Tugia and Maria Musudroka, helped interview respondents from Cakaudrove, Lau, Macuata and Rewa. Refer (Appendix 4) for list of people interviewed.

4.1 The Respondents

The respondents were divided into three categories;

- Primary respondents - The *Vanua Sukanacagi* of Vitogo District under the Ba Province. The six villages that are led by Tui Vitogo are Vitogo, Naviyago, Namoli, Saro, Vakabuli and Matawalu.
- Primary respondents - Fijians with Indian ethnicity in Civicivi settlement and Tuvu settlement in Ba to help gauge a comparative understanding of whether women of other ethnicity might be enjoying their spaces.
- Primary respondents - the views of young women; a mixed group of Fijians with *itaukei* and Indian ethnicity were also sought;
- Secondary respondents - Women of other provinces were also interviewed. To gauge a comparative understanding of whether *itaukei* women of other provinces might be enjoying their own spaces. All women were actively involved in their respective villages and provinces but three were resident in their respective villages.

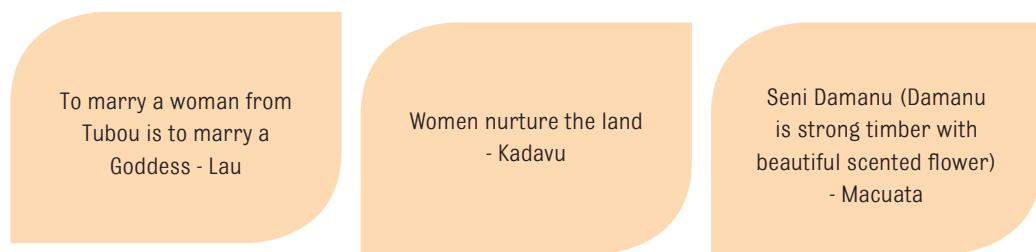
5.0 FINDINGS

“..Women are the lifeblood of the Vanua..”

5.1 Women’s Value in Society

In response to the hypothesis, the respondents said that women have a place in society because they were valued members of a family, clan and/or *vanua*. The role of the woman was crucial in the running of their society be it in the economic, political and/or social sphere. A respondent emphasised that, *“We are not feminists who are coming in with a need and the mindset to be empowered. No! Our society empowers us to be who we are in our God given role as nurturers, and also our supportive role within our families and mataqali...”*

5.1.1 The Metaphors in Some Parts of Fiji



5.1.2 Explanation for the Metaphors

- “Women are the lifeblood of the *vanua*”, (Marama Sovaki Naiviteitei, Bureta, Ovalau, 26/1/18). This means that without women, there is no life in the *vanua* or land. The woman is therefore necessary and vital for the survival of a *vanua*.
- “To marry a woman from Tubou is to marry a goddess”; (Tubou, Lakeba, Lau). This means that a woman from Tubou deserves to be respected and adored because she is a goddess.
- “Mea na *vanua*” (women nurture the land). In Kadavu, the woman nurtures the land, meaning, she is like a mother who ensures that all is well. Her love therefore extends beyond the boundary of family to include visitors and strangers.
- Women are labelled “Seni Damanu”. Damanu is a strong timber used to construct a house, bondage for bullock pair and to plough the field. The flower is white and blooms once a year and are only scented at night. (Seaqqaqa, 2/18). Therefore women are unyielding but also sweet smelling and rare.

5.2 Woman’s Place

In the context of Tuwere’s Trinitarian Solemnity (2002:52), translated to *vanua* (land), *lotu* (church) and *matanitu* (government), where he explains that they are interdependent. Disconnecting one will mean the collapse of all.

The following describes the spaces where women’s voices are heard and recognised for their place in *itaukei* society.

5.2.1 Woman’s Social Place in the *Vanua*

The respondents said that a woman’s place in her society was evident in the customary practices accorded to her from birth until her death. The following matrix illustrates some of the practices and intentions for clarity:

Woman's Social Place In the *Vanua* - Table 1

Practice	Why
At birth, after the stump of the umbilical cord falls off, it is buried on a selected site regardless of gender.	The child will live in harmony with nature
The umbilical cord stumps of baby girls in Natumua, Kadavu are buried in the reef.	Women's access to the sea is within the boundaries of the reef which they control while the men extends beyond the reef.
After birth, regardless of gender, the new baby and mother are visited by relatives in the ceremony of <i>roqoroqo</i>	Celebration of the birth of a child
After the fourth night, regardless of gender, there is a feast. The name for this event varies.	To celebrate the survival of the baby
Tattoo for girls – in the hinterland	Protection of prying eyes when they go swimming in the forest
Brother and sister <i>tabu</i>	They do not share clothing. Must respect each other. The boy must always protect sister to ensure her safety. He must support her in her time of need, even after marriage and she is living with her husband and family
Girl's first menstruation. She stays at home under the supervision of her grandmother, aunt or mother. On the fourth night, there is a feast	
To celebrate a girl's introduction to womanhood	
When a young couple begins to court, the <i>rogoci</i> is performed by the boy's family to the girl's family	To seek confirmation directly from the girl that she is willing and not forced into this relationship
The boy's family performs the <i>lakovi</i> to the girl's family	Boy's family seeks the girl's hand in marriage
Girl's family perform the <i>Tataunaki</i> where the girl's father or an uncle seeks re-assurance from the boy's family that they will look after the girl well	To ensure security and safety for their girl
The bride is coached and encouraged by the older women before the consummation of their marriage	To reduce her anxiety and help stabilise her before she has sex, particularly if she is a virgin
If she was a virgin, there is music and merrymaking on the fourth night	
To celebrate a woman's chastity	
Covi ni draudrau After the woman is married, she is allocated a personal garden by her family/clan from which she eats vegetables, fruits	To ensure that even though she is married and is away, she must never go hungry
<i>Butucola</i> - When a woman is widowed, her clan will visit her husband's to seek her return (via <i>tabua</i>). According to tradition, she has fulfilled her role and that her children, if any, were the responsibility of the clan to which their father belonged	<i>Keivakano</i> - Husband's clan will reciprocate with <i>tabua</i> to decline. They will retaliate by saying that she is an important member of their clan now and is needed to help nurture the children of their clan.
After the deceased is buried, the clan will present the maternal side with <i>tabua</i> and other gifts they might wish to add	Gratitude for the nurturing role of a mother

Role of <i>Nei</i> (sister, father's sister and so on) is crucial in a family/clan. She is always there to support, mentor, guide and protect. She is the matriarch of the clan	A married women's contribution to her family/clan is varied. She is the peace-maker. She is the teacher of the ways of her clan/tribe. She maintains order and mentors women who do not belong but married into her clan to familiarize them with her clan culture and tradition
When there is an event such as a wedding for example, the women manage the production of mats and <i>masi</i> etc while the men are responsible for the <i>magiti</i> /feast, the <i>tabua</i> and the grog. The youth help with the cooking and run errands. They also help the women clean up. There is consultation throughout and the chief is also kept informed on progress on a regular basis.	Division of labour for cooperation and sustenance of the <i>vanua</i>
Fixed marriages are still entertained although not as frequent as in the past	To renew and strengthen old relationships
<i>Veidrotaki</i> is elopement. Generally, they will elope to the boy's family	But wherever they choose to be, the boy's family will eventually present their <i>bulubulu</i> as an apology for the couple's wrong-doing and also to reconcile with the girl's family, before marriage can eventuate.
Food culture. Most respondents referred to a food culture prevalent to them but not practiced by others. It could be a certain fish that is cooked in a special way like the women of Naivilaca and their busa. The women of Bureta to whom big <i>dalo</i> is allocated while the men eat the small <i>dalo</i> . The people of Muani (Kadavu) who present their first catch of tabace fish to Ji Naivi of Natumua Kadavu). Men prepare <i>vakalolo</i> (pudding) for a mother after child-birth and other celebrations	Evidence of relationship building using food they are familiar with.
To honour the custodians of the fishing ground from which tabace is caught in Muani	

5.2.1.1 Explanation for Table 1 – Woman's Social Place in the *Vanua*

The table illustrates the customary practices (most of which are still practised) shared by the respondents. They signify the role of the *itaukei* woman. From birth, she is given equal space to the male baby when their umbilical cord stumps are planted. This is done with the belief that the child will grow up to live in harmony with nature. In return, nature will sustain the child into adulthood and beyond. The table also reveals that for every stage of the woman's development, there is a celebration; during birth, menstruation, courting, marriage, childbirth and even in death. Then there is the women's role of mentoring, supporting and cooperation to sustain a society and build peace. The other, is gender role in food preparation. For example, in Bureta, the big *dalo* is given to the women while the men who planted the *dalo* will take the small *dalo*. The preparation of the *vakalolo*, a Fijian pudding is done by the grandfather of the baby for the mother to eat after child-birth and for every celebration thereafter. In Noco, Rewa however, it is the women who cook the busa (a fish) in a special way for an honoured visitor or guests. Like the men of Bureta who give the bigger *dalo* to their women, the busa as presented by the women from Noco, is an exhibition of one's expertise and not necessarily by virtue of gender.

5.2.2 The Fostering Role of the *Nei* is Social and Political

The significance of the role of the *Nei*, (in this context is the sister, the father's sister, the grand-father's sister and so on) must also be highlighted. The *Nei* enculturates women married into her clan. Where the *Nei* is married out of her clan, she remains connected to her clan through her level of relationship with the people which now includes her children who have become vasu to her clan. *Nei* is the counsellor. *Nei* is the comforter, and she also rules the roost. If there is a wayward child in the family, particularly a brother's child, *Nei* is asked to talk to the errant child. While the *bulubulu*, a custom performed by the men is recognised as the common practice for peace-making, the subtle but similar and more personal role of the *Nei* is often overlooked in formal peace-building process. A reliable source recently revealed that in the late 20th century, a sister of a high chief in one of the provinces in the Western division barged into the council meeting of the *vanua* which was chaired by her brother. She confronted them by telling them to stop the meeting because it was useless. It was not effective. She was the *Nei* for his children. And therefore to the *vanua*. This was acceptable behaviour for a *Nei* in a tribe.¹³

5.3 Women's Economic Rights - Land, Security and Protection

Since the beginning of time, women have been valued as partakers and leaders. As Bolabola (1986:13) explains, women like men, acquired their rights to land primarily through affiliation with groups. Adopted females had the same rights to land as did natural children. *Bolabola* notes (1986:52-53) that children of unmarried mothers were taken care of by their mother's family and traditionally adopted as members of her group. Widowed 'foreign' women remained in the village with their children even after her relatives had performed the customary 'request' for her return to her village of birth.

5.4 Women's Voices

All the respondents noted that women's voices were heard in the village via at least three avenues being the *Bose Vakoro*, or village council, the women's group of their church and their village branch of the *Sqosqoqo Vakamarama*, an NGO that was formed prior to Fiji's Independence (1970). However, a young respondent said that she was often overlooked in family discussions and at village meetings until she was employed. Since she has been contributing a part of her salary to her family, she now no longer feels alienated as she did before she found employment.

5.4.1 Women's Voices in Vitogo

In Vitogo village of the *vanua* of Vitogo (*Sukanacagi*), the Methodist Church of which most of the villagers are members, meets monthly. Before this meeting, the women's group would have met and agreed on issues to be raised at the monthly meeting. A similar thing happens before the village council (*Bose Vakoro*) which meets fortnightly. As in other villages in Fiji, there are committees in the village council. In Vitogo, there are separate committees for *Lawa ni Koro* (law and order), *marama* (women), *tabagone* (youth), *veivakalotutaki* (evangelism), *leqa tubukoso* (disaster), *vuli* (education), *Yada* (widow), *qase* (elderly) *lokiloki* (disabled), and other vulnerable members like single parent, *tikobulabula* (health), *yaubula* (environment), *veivakatorocaketaki* (development). These committees submit their reports to the Village Council of which every adult resident in the village is a member and eligible to speak. The *Bose Vanua* is the forum within which land and title issues, for example, are addressed. The membership includes a Chairperson who is usually the chief, and heads of *mataqali* and/or *yavusa*. If a woman is the head of her *mataqali* (clan) or *yavusa* (tribe) she becomes a member of the *Bose Vanua* as well.

13 Oral interview Marama Sovaki, 26/1/18

5.5 Dealing with Domestic Violence and Human Rights

When there is a domestic violence case in Vitogo village, they don't interfere like they used to. They leave it to the couple and/or immediate family and in extreme cases, the police to deal with. From the perspective of the *Vanua*, they prefer to undertake their own responsibility to deal with issues like domestic violence for example. In addition, they also have a Lawa ni Koro Committee to help resolve the conflict. Ideally, the village would prefer to take responsibility as it is in line with their Christian faith, but the western emphasis on individual/women's rights limits them from interfering. Likewise if a child is getting beaten, they leave it to immediate family members and/or the police to intervene.

5.6 Spaces for Indo-Fijian Women

The research found that Indo-Fijian women were also valued in their communities. They spoke freely at home and managed the domestic affairs of their respective families. They did not have the parentage of a local government system monitoring them in a manner similar to the *itaukei*. This allowed them liberty to organise and manage their own affairs without interference from the government. The Civicivi Settlement Women's Club for example is made up of women from a small cane-farming community who engage in an income-generating project to help improve their livelihoods. In the process, they work with FRIEND and have also registered their bee-keeping business with the Ministry of Women. They received funding and support from FRIEND and the government. Their beekeeping business is running profitably at present. Once a month there is a mandali for their community. This is led by the men. There is also a weekly mandali which the women organise. During the prayer, the men sit at the back while the women lead. The women of *Tuvu* Settlement do not have a micro-business project. They are subsistence farming families. Their priority is the home. They responded that their families/homes were their priorities. They were not interested in joining the district council although they were aware of a woman member but she had died.



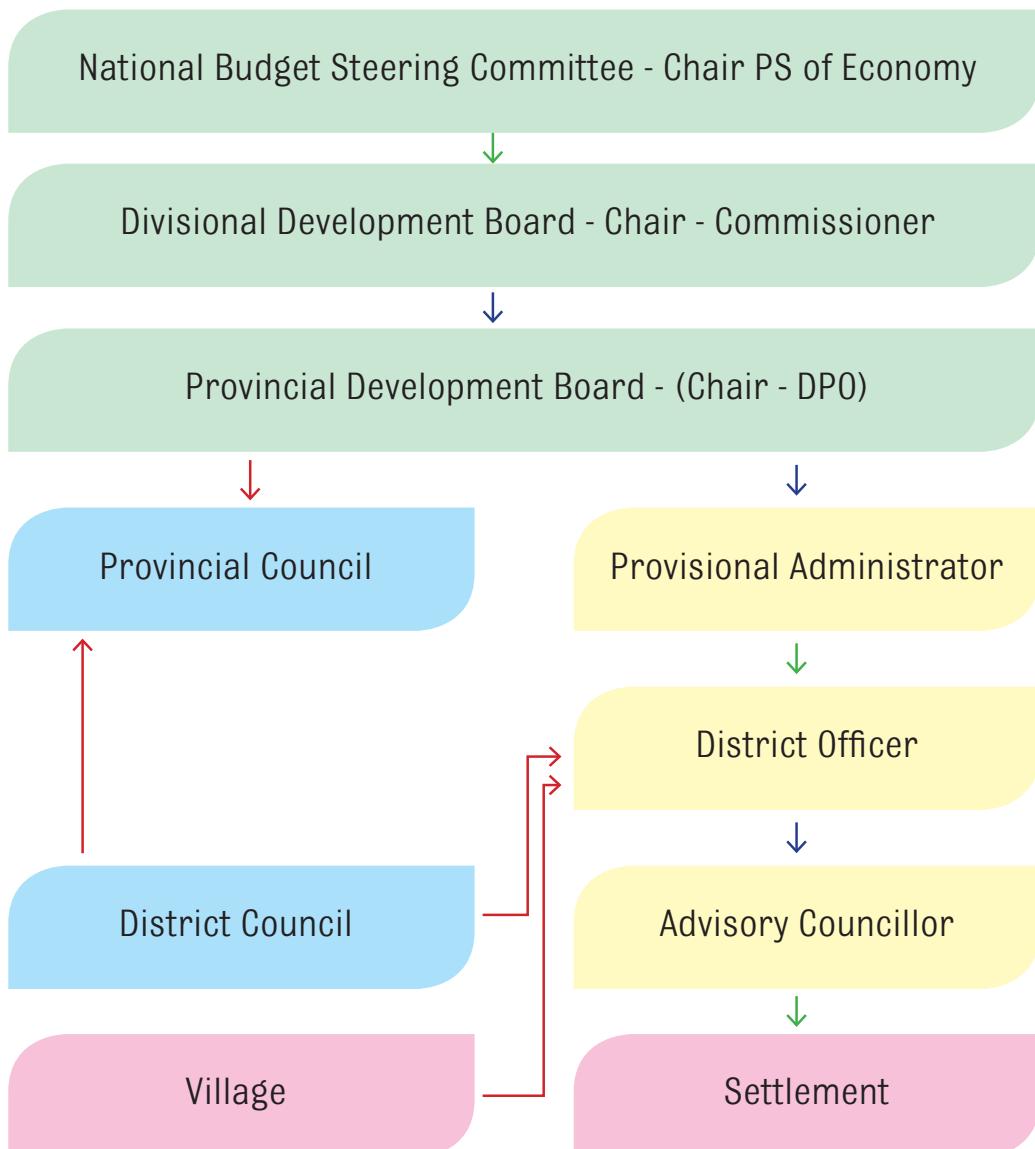
5.7 Spaces for Women of Other Ethnic Groups

Respondents shared that women of other ethnicities in settlements found their spaces through the religious organisations they belonged to. These spaces gave them the opportunity to voice their concerns and work with others in finding ways to support their families.

5.8 Women's Spaces in the Government

Fiji has a dual-local government system, the origin for which is explained in 2.1. In 2008, as a consequence of the government's decolonisation plan under the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress, *itaukei* development was mainstreamed in an integrated development structure at the divisional level under the Ministry of Provincial Development (Daurewa 2013:84). This means that while there are two separate local government structures serving villages under the Ministry of *itaukei* Affairs and settlements in rural and peri-urban areas (under the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development), they merge later as one structure under the four administrative divisions; central, eastern, northern and western of the Ministry of Provincial Development.

Figure 1 below refers. Source: Pacific Centre for Peace Building DUA Project Evaluation Report, Daurewa, 2017: Local Government Functional Structure.



5.8.1 Explanation for Figure 1

The functional structure above illustrates that people at grassroots level (village and settlement) have the opportunity to contribute to policy processes within the government. They also recommend development proposals for funding support through the budget steering committee that is chaired by the Minister for Economy.

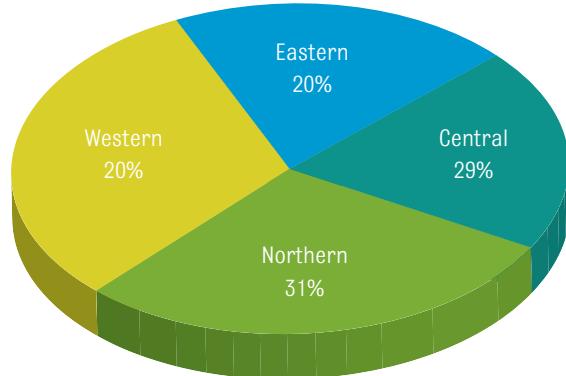
5.9 Women in Decision Making at Divisional Local Government

The significance of the above structure (Figure 1) to women:

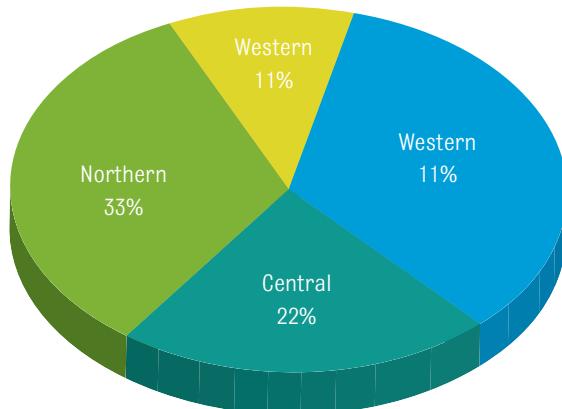
- Enables women through their representatives to contribute to decision making at village and provincial council levels;
- Enables women to participate at all levels (from village/settlement up to the National Budget Steering Committee) and to contribute to policy development and decision because they are qualified to do so by virtue of their meeting the government's criteria for membership.

According to the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, women representing their respective provincial and district constituencies (2018-2019) serve in the Provincial Development Board (PDB) and the Divisional Development Board (DDB). (*Appendix 1 for List with women's membership refers*).

Fig.2 - Women in Provincial Development Board



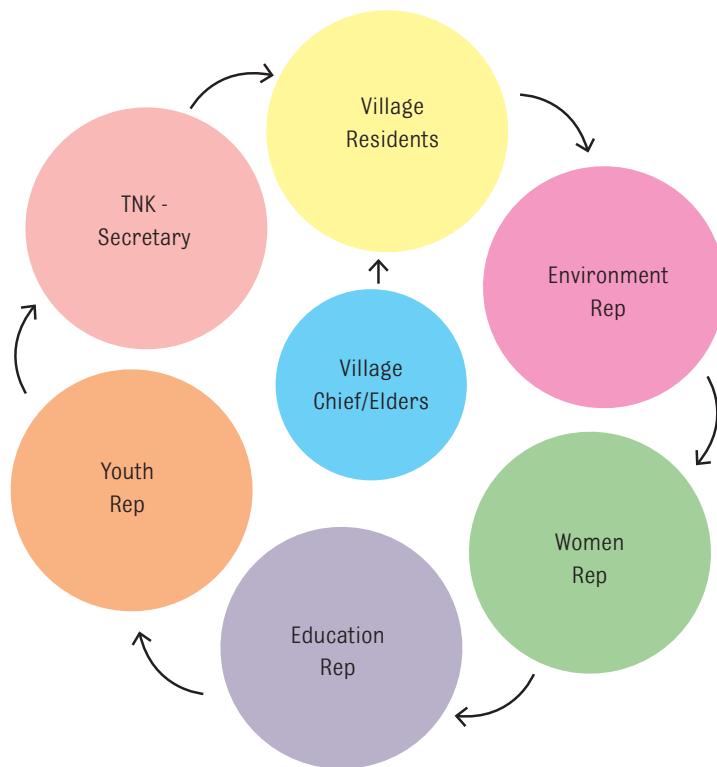
Of the 14 PDBs, the Northern division recorded the highest number of women at 31%, Central at 29% and Eastern and Western at 20%. Figure 2 refers: (Source: Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, February 2018) At the higher strata for Divisional Development Board (DDP) (refer to Figure 3 below), the Eastern division has the most number of women with 34%, followed by the Northern at 33%, Central 22% and Western 11%.



5.10 At the Village Council

There are about 1,171 villages, under 187 districts in 14 provinces (Daurewa 2013:70). In every village, there is a Turaga ni Koro (Turaga ni Koro) who is a quasi-employee of the government. He coordinates development and represents the village at the regular *tikina* (district) level meeting. For his effort, he receives a modest allowance on production of his report to the Roko Tui at the Provincial Office - the secretariat for the Provincial Council. In the latest development, there are now two women, or Marama ni Koro (MNK), according to the Ministry of *itaukei* Affairs. The two villages with MNK are Vuiriqlilai in the district of Sasa, Macuata Province and, Natunuku in the district of Bulu in the Ba Province. Normally, the TNK (Turaga ni Koro) consults the village chief and/or the Bose Vakoro (village forum) for a decision on the regularity of its village meeting.

Figure 4:

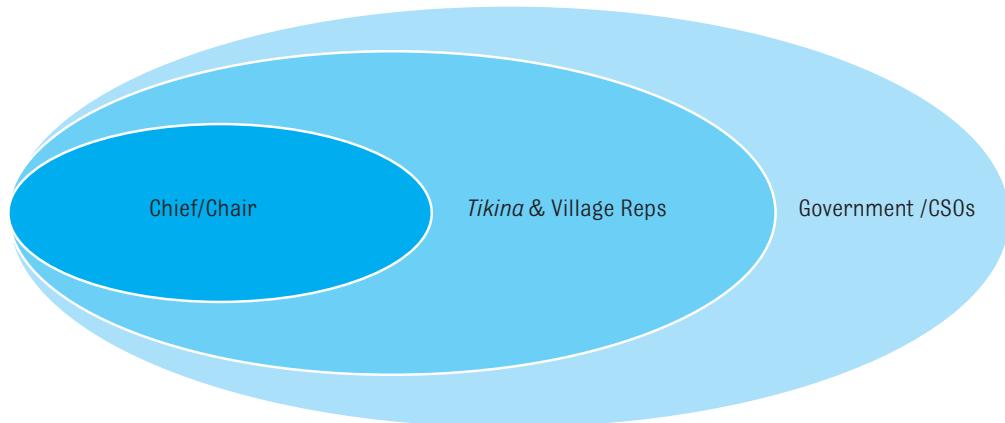


5.10.1 Explanation of Figure 4

This structure illustrates that the village chief or his/her nominee chairs the meeting while the TNK (Turaga ni Koro) or MNK (Marama ni Koro) or his/her assistant (where necessary) acts as the secretary. In the villages, there will be a committee for the women, the youth, usually the dominant church (like the Methodist denomination), and depending on their preference, other committees like education, health, environment, disaster-response and so on. Each committee reports to the village meeting where there is usually no restriction for any village resident including women wishing to speak. Meeting outcomes are then addressed by the TNK (Turaga ni Koro)/MNK (Marama ni Koro) in consultation with relevant committees/individuals.

5.11 At the District Council

The TNK (Turaga ni Koro) /MNK (Marama ni Koro) represents the village at the regular *tikina* or district council meeting which is usually chaired by the chief of the collective villages. According to the Ministry of *itaukei* Affairs, two women chiefs chair district councils. One for the *tikina* of Rewa in the province of Rewa and *tikina* of Ono in the province of Kadavu. Usually, the chief and one or two members (depending on the population and number of villages) of the district council represent the district to the Provincial Council.



Explanation of Figure 5

This meeting is considered the most crucial because this is where projects are prioritised for Government-funding support. Civil servant representatives from government are present at this District meeting for consultative purpose. Sometimes, district representatives meet with the Provincial Administrator and/or Commissioner when necessary.

5.12 At the Provincial Council

The role of the Provincial Council is to monitor development in the Province. As a Government funded-forum, its priority therefore is to address the social and economic implications of Government-funded projects on the people. The Government appoints the chairperson of the Provincial Council. Representatives from the Government, non-government and other agencies attend the meeting for consultative purpose. Where necessary, the approval of the Council is sought for Government and other development initiatives. According to the Ministry of *itaukei* Affairs, there are currently 33 women who are members of the Provincial Council, including the two chiefs referred to earlier (5.11). (Appendix 2 refers for list of names in each province).

6.0 CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the existence of platforms within the formal and informal sectors recognise and respect the role of women within the *itaukei* society and women of other ethnicity within their geographic locations. This is evident within the traditional governance structure, the government's local government system and the religious groups that are represented in the villages and settlements.

Customary practices in *itaukei* society reveal that traditionally women and men shared complementary roles and responsibilities to sustain the economic, political and social life of the *vanua*.

Women were involved in the political life of the *vanua* as leaders, warriors, seafarers and peacemakers. Women were also involved in the economic life of the *vanua* as custodians of the land and traders. Socially, the role of women is revered from birth through death.

Over time, development issues like migration, misinterpretation of Christian principles, colonisation, urbanisation and other contributory factors like the western approach to women's rights as an individual need has diluted a God-like belief system which religiously upheld that women were equal to men.

Ironically, a modified local government structure that has its origins in the British colonial's indirect rule is primarily responsible for their ability to sustain platforms where women are necessary components within the life of a *vanua*.

There are however certain age-old customary practices that remain which suggest that females are equally precious as the males in the life cycle of the *itaukei*.

The female new-born baby is given equal space to the male baby when their umbilical cord stumps are planted. The significance of this act, is that the child will grow up to live in harmony with nature. In return, nature will sustain the child into adulthood and beyond.

Furthermore, for every stage of the female's development, there is a celebration: for birth, menstruation, courting, marriage, childbirth and even in death.

In the *itaukei* food culture, men and women practise specific roles in food preparation for certain delicacies (exclusive to their clan or tribe) for their respective expertise and not because of gender.

Women are equal landowners (to men) by virtue of their birth to a landowning unit, regardless of whether they are chiefs or not.

Women contribute to decision making within a *vanua* because of their leadership role in the clan, tribe, and/or a province including Government's local government structure for the *itaukei*.

In addition, there is the women's role of mentoring, supporting and cooperation to sustain a society and build peace.

Similarly, Indo-Fijian women were equally valued in their communities. However, they did not have the parentage of a local government system thus offer them liberty to manage their own affairs without interference from the government.

In addition, women living in settlements, regardless of their ethnicity, found spaces, (whether as members of a religious group or interest group) through which to articulate and actualise their concerns. Women living in settlements and other residential areas also have the opportunity to contribute to policy formulation and recommendation for government budgetary consideration for development.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

However, the following gaps were recognised and recommended for FRIEND's consideration:

- Space to be allocated for *talanoa* sessions on human rights issues which is not new but already embedded within customary practices, some of which continue to be practised. Given the alarming record of *itaukei* as main perpetrators of rape and serious sexual offences, particularly on women and children, this will help curb this evil;
- Space to be allocated for *talanoa* sessions on customary practices in *itaukei* society which recognise the special role of women and their contributions to social cohesion;
- Space to be allocated for *talanoa* sessions on fostering understanding to better equip men and women in their political and socio-economic roles to strengthen engagement with each other and government officials;
- In collaboration with the relevant government agencies, awareness is raised on Fiji's dual local government system and how they could be accessed by the people, especially women as participants in the available spaces for civil society within the functional structures of provincial boards and divisional boards under the respective four divisional (central, eastern, northern and western) commissioners at the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development. These boards (provincial and divisional) enable civil society to contribute to decision making in formulation of government policies and national budgetary development. They are also ideal preparatory platforms for women who might want to enter politics;

FRIEND propagates its programme on gender roles, through the following avenues, wherever practical: traditional governance system, local government system, religious groups and/or other interest groups.

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Appendix 1

PROVINCIAL and DIVISIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development, National Disaster Management & Meteorological Services

Women Membership Provincial & Divisional Development Board 2017-2019

Eastern Division

Province	No of Women Members	Total members	Percentage
Lau	2	12	17.00%
Kadavu	1	9	11%
Lomaiviti	1	8	13.00%
Rotuma	3	8	38%
Total	7	37	19%
DDB Members	3	12	25%

Central Division

Province	No of Women Members	Total members	Percentage
Naitasiri	2	12	17.00%
Tailevu	1	9	11%
Namosi	1	12	8.00%
Serua	4	12	33%
Rewa/Suva	2	12	17%
Total	10	57	18%
DDB Members	2	14	14%

Northern Division

Province	No of Women Members	Total members	Percentage
Macuata	5	12	42.00%
Cakaudrove	2	14	14%
Bua	4	13	31.00%
Total	11	39	28%
DDB Members	3	15	20%

Western Division

Province	No of Women Members	Total members	Percentage
Ra	2	11	18.00%
Nadroga/Navosa	2	11	18%
Ba	3	13	23.00%
Total	7	35	20%
DDB Members	1	12	8%

Appendix 2

MINISTRY OF INTAUKEI AFFAIRS - LIST OF WOMEN MARAMA NI KORO and MEMBERS OF DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Province	MNK	LBT	MNT	MTV	MSV	MTG
Ba	1		1		1	
Bua			2		1	
Cakaudrove			1		1	1
Kadavu		1		1	1	
Lau			1	1	1	
Lomaiviti			1		1	
Macuata	1	1	1		1	
Nadroga/Navosa			1	1	1	
Naitasiri					1	
Namosi					1	
Ra		1	1		1	
Rewa		1			1	
Serua					1	
Tailevu			1		1	1

MNK = *Marama ni Koro*

LBT = *Liuliu ni Bose ni Tikina*

MNT= *Mata ni Talai*

MTV= *Mata ni Tu Vakacakacaka*

MSV= *Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama*

MTG= *Mata ni Tabagone*

Province	MNK	LBT	MNT	MTV	MSV	MTG
Ba	Radi Valeria		1		1	
Bua			2		1	
Cakaudrove			1		1	1
Kadavu		1		1	1	
Lau			1	1	1	
Lomaiviti			1		1	
Macuata	1	1	1		1	
Nadroga/Navosa			1	1	1	
Naitasiri					1	
Namosi					1	
Ra		1	1		1	
Rewa		1			1	
Serua					1	
Tailevu			1		1	1

Province	MNK	LBT	MNT	MTV	MSV	MTG
Ba	1		1		1	
Bua			2		1	
Cakaudrove			1		1	1
Kadavu		1		1	1	
Lau			1	1	1	
Lomaiviti			1		1	
Macuata	1	1	1		1	
Nadroga/Navosa			1	1	1	
Naitasiri					1	
Namosi					1	
Ra		1	1		1	
Rewa		1			1	
Serua					1	
Tailevu			1		1	1

Marama Ni Koro

1. Rosalia Amele – Vuiriqlai, Sasa Macuata
2. Radi Valeria – Natunuku, Bulu, Ba

Women Provincial Council Members

Ba

1. Adi Marica Dawai - Mata ni Talai Nadi
2. Bikoca Burenivalu - Liuliu ni

Bua

1. Adi Ana Ramatai - Mata ni Talai
2. Tarusila Veibi Ratu - Mata ni Talai
3. Unaisi Maria - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Cakaudrove

1. Anaseini Ligiaiari - Mata ni Talai Nabalebale
2. Adi Kunea Lalabalavu - Liuliu ni SSVM
3. Vaseva Muabega - Liuliu ni Tabagone

Kadavu

1. Bulou Elenoa Misikini - Liuliu ni Bose ni Tikina Ono
2. Alishi Daurewa - Mata Tu Vakacakacaka Suva
3. Bulou Lusiana Duikete - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Lau

1. Dr. Jimaima Lako – Mata ni Talai
2. Mrs Tailasa Mau - Mata ni Tu Vakacakacaka – Suva
3. Adi Kakua Mara - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Lomaiviti

1. Taina Ravutu - Mata ni Talai
2. Sereana Qoro - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Macuata

1. Adi Pasemaca Valalau - Mata ni Talai
2. Adi Ana Valotu - Liuliu ni Bose ni Tikina o Sasa
3. Ranadi Matakibau - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Nadroga/Navosa

1. Adi Litia Makutu - Mata ni Talai
2. Mere Diligolevu Naseka - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama
3. Vulori Sarai - Mata Tu Vakacakacaka Suva

Naitasiri

1. Adi Lagamu Baledrokadroka - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Namosi

1. Ro Iva Gukibau - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Ra

1. Mereani Tuwaci Rasolo - Mata ni Talai
2. Sereima Adidave - Ratu ni Nataua/Liuliu ni Bose ni Tikina Saivou
3. Sereana Macedru - Liuliu ni SSVM

Rewa

1. Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa - Liuliu ni Bose ni Tikina ko Rewa
2. Ro Elenoa Cuanilawa Gonelevu - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama

Serua

1. Maraia Tuibau - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama
2. Merewalesi Verebalavu - Mata ni Talai – Namena 3
3. Adi Varanisese Seru Seniloli - Mata ni Soqosoqo Vakamarama
4. Kelera Savai – Mata ni Tabagone

MARAMA NI KORO - 2 PC MEMBERS - 33 TOTAL - 35

Appendix 3

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

No	Method	Name	Vanua/Province	Residence
1	FGD	Tui Vito gó	Vitogo/Ba	Vitogo
2	FGD	Adi Litiana Sovasova	Vitogo/Ba	Vitogo
3	FGD	Alesi Nawaqa Basudra	Vitogo/Ba	Vitogo
4	FGD	Asena Gukirewa	Vitogo/Ba	Vitogo
5	FGD	Tarusila	Vitogo/Ba	Vitogo
6	FGD	Ulamila Ratu	Vitogo/Ba	Vitogo
7	II	Marama Sovaki	Bureta/Lomaiviti	Bureta
8	II	Semaema Tagica	Noco/Rewa & Natumua/ Kadavu	Suva
9	FGD	Divya Ragni	Lautoka	Ba
10	FGD	Jenny Naidu	Tuva	Ba
11	FGD	Melaia Salacakau	Dreketi/Macuata	Lautoka
12	FGD	Talei Tinai	Bucalevu/Ra	Lautoka
13	FGD	Shobna Singh	Drasa, Lautoka	Civicivi Settlement
14	FGD	Anju Chauhan	Drasa, Lautoka	Civicivi Settlement
15	FGD	Rina Verma	Drasa, Lautoka	Civicivi Settlement
16	FGD	Shiu Narayan	Tuvu Settlement	Ba
17	FGD	Pushpawati S Narayan	Tuvu Settlement	Ba
18	FGD	Susan Narayan	Tuvu Settlement	Ba
19	II	Tuwaci Rasolo	Ra/Hinterland	Suva
20	II	Maria Musudroka	Macuata/Rewa	Suva
21	II	Losalini Tugia	Lau/Cakaudrove	Lautoka
22	FGD	Women & Youth	Wainunu, Bua	Daria Village, 11/3

Appendix 4

ACRONYMS

DDB	Divisional Development Board
DPO	Divisional Planning Officer
EU	European Union
FRIEND	Foundation for Rural Integration, Enterprises and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
II	Individual Interviews
MNK	Marama ni Koro
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PDP	Provincial Development Board
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TNK	Turaga ni Koro
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Appendix 5

GLOSSARY

1	<i>Bulubulu</i>	Atonement, to atone one's guilt to the injured party
2	<i>Butucola</i>	When the widow's family asks for her return after her husband's funeral. <i>Lakovi</i> is used in some parts of Fiji
3	<i>Covi ni draudrau</i>	A dowry. When a tract of land is given to a woman by her family for her and her children. This transaction of land is symbolic of her father's valuation of the new bride and is given with the understanding that her husband and his family will treat her with respect. Land given as dowry is redeemable following the presentation of <i>i vakalutu</i> after the woman had two generations of descendants ¹
4	<i>Dalo</i>	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i> – a staple starchy root crop of the Fijians ²
5	<i>itaukei</i>	Indigenous Fijian
6	<i>Keivakano</i>	When the deceased husband's family declines the widow's family's request for her return to them
7	<i>Komiti ni Lawanikoro</i>	Law and Order Committee
8	<i>Komiti ni Legatubukoso</i>	Disaster Management Committee
9	<i>Komiti ni Lokiloki</i>	People with Disability Committee
10	<i>Komiti ni Marama</i>	Women's Committee
11	<i>Komiti ni Tabagone</i>	Youth Committee
12	<i>Komiti ni Tikobulabula</i>	Health and Wellbeing Committee
13	<i>Komiti ni Veivakalotutaki</i>	Evangelisation Committee
14	<i>Komiti ni Veivakatorocaketaki</i>	Development Committee
15	<i>Komiti ni Vuli</i>	Education Committee
16	<i>Komiti ni Yaubula</i>	Environment Committee
17	<i>Lakovi</i>	When the potential groom's family proposes to the potential bride's family. Also see 2 above.
18	<i>Lala</i>	Work commissioned by a chief, the labour for which is reciprocated with a feast and gift in kind
19	<i>Magiti</i>	Ceremonial feast or food gift
20	<i>Mandala</i>	Prayer meeting (in Hindi)
21	<i>Masi</i>	Bark cloth made out of mulberry plants
22	<i>Mataqali</i>	An agnatically related social unit – usually a lineage of the larger clan
23	<i>Nei</i>	Aunt (father's sister, mother's brother's wife, mother-in-law and extended family of cross cousins depending on the lineage)
24	<i>Qase</i>	Old

1 See Bolabola, C, 1986:6 Land Rights of Pacific Women

2 See Ravuvu, A, 1983:118 The Fijian Way of Life

25	<i>Qoliqoli</i>	Fishing ground
26	<i>Rogoci</i>	When a couple is courting and the boy's family seeks confirmation from the girl's family for her love and commitment to him
27	<i>roqoroqo</i>	To offer gifts to a new born child – usually the first born
28	<i>Tabu</i>	Taboo, prohibition
29	<i>Tabua</i>	Whale's tooth, used in ceremonial exchanges
30	<i>talanoa</i>	Dialogue or story-telling
31	<i>tataunaki</i>	When the new bride's family seeks confirmation from the groom and his family that they will respect and protect her
32	<i>Tikina</i>	And administrative sub-unit of a Province
33	<i>tunudra</i>	A ceremonial feast normally offered on the 4th night after the birth of a child to the midwife & others involved
34	<i>vakalolo</i>	Pudding made from <i>dalo</i> cooked in coconut cream
35	<i>vakamau</i>	Marriage
36	<i>Vanua</i>	Land, people and custom
37	<i>veidrotaki</i>	Elope
38	<i>Yada</i>	Widow
39	<i>yavusa</i>	A social unit of agnatically related members larger than the <i>mataqali</i> and the members of which claim descendants from a common founding male ancestor
40	<i>yaqona</i>	Piper methysticum – a plant the roots of which are prepared and used by indigenous Fijians as a social and ceremonial drink