

ANAND SATYANAND:
A PROMINENT SON OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA

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As Anand Satyanand and his wife Susan stepped out of their car on 23 August 2006 before New Zealand's parliamentary buildings, beautiful floral garlands were presented and a *tilak* placed on their foreheads.¹ A powhiri (welcome ceremony) from Tangata Whenua (local Māori) followed, during which a Māori cloak was enveloped around Satyanand; then came the "swearing in" and inspection of the military guard. These were all ceremonies for New Zealand's nineteenth Governor-General as the official representative of Queen Elizabeth II. The Indian welcome marked this ceremony as unique, because it celebrated New Zealand's first Governor-General of Asian and Pacific Island origin. In his inaugural speech as Governor-General, Satyanand paid deference to his "linkage with Fiji, where my parents were born and raised," as well as to his Indian origins, "with four grandparents who migrated from that country to Fiji."² Indian labourers in early-twentieth-century New Zealand and Fiji would have been incredulous that an Indian could become the Governor-General of New Zealand.³ Satyanand's appointment as Governor-General reflects shifting ethnic and national demographics and identities within New Zealand. Although this has coincided with enhanced links between New Zealand and India and India's rise as a global power, Satyanand's links with India stem from more humble connections.

Five years later on 8 January 2011, Satyanand was welcomed as the Chief Guest at the Ninth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in New Delhi. By then he was His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anand Satyanand, GNZM, QSO, because of changes to titles in the New Zealand honours system.⁴ India's President, Pratibha Patil, presented Satyanand with a Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award for his outstanding achievements in public life.⁵ Although honoured at this major meeting for Non Resident Indians

1 A *tilak* is a Hindu marking, here indicating the auspiciousness of the occasion and the incumbent Governor-General's status.

2 Anand Satyanand, "Speech at Swearing-In Ceremony. Parliament Buildings, Wellington," 23 August 2006, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/703> (accessed 13 February 2011).

3 See Brij V. Lal, *Girmityas: The Origins of the Fiji Indians* (Canberra: The Journal of Pacific History Monograph, 1983); and Jacqueline Leckie, *Indian Settlers: The Story of a New Zealand South Asian Community* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007).

4 In 2000 titles in the New Zealand honours system were dropped, but, after a change in government, the Queen reinstated titles on 23 March 2009. Satyanand was designated as Principal Knight Grand Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

5 Anand Satyanand, "Speech as Chief Guest to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, India," 8 January 2011, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/3490> (accessed 14 January 2011).

(NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), Satyanand asserted his New Zealand roots: “While proud of my Indian and Pacific heritage, New Zealand is my home, and I know no other, and I would not wish it to be any other way.”⁶ Although he declared his Indian heritage, this was contextualized within the long settlement of Indians in New Zealand:

It is a privilege to stand here as a proud New Zealander whose four grandparents migrated from this country to make a new life thousands of kilometres away in the South Pacific. Those people and their descendants have never forgotten their origins and to this day remain proud of the culture and heritage of India.... For 200 years, people of Indian descent have lived in New Zealand and for 200 years they have embodied India’s traditions and values. That heritage is one that New Zealanders have increasingly come to appreciate and cherish.⁷

Satyanand’s life story reflects both the past and the future of New Zealand–Asia relations. It opens a window on the long history of Asian settlement in New Zealand.⁸ He was also a forerunner of what is becoming the new multicultural New Zealand, where Asian ethnicity, heritage, and economic interests are a prominent component.⁹ Just as Satyanand’s ancestry was transnational—spanning India, Fiji, and New Zealand—he too has been a leader in cementing New Zealand’s links with India. Accordingly, this article will explore these broader changes between New Zealand and India through focusing on three aspects of Satyanand’s life. First, the paper traces Satyanand’s historical connections with India and the Indian diaspora. Satyanand’s heritage reflects a weaving of the Indian diaspora with the South Pacific that is more complex than a direct link with Asia, suggesting how India has been localized in New Zealand, but also indicating a recentring of the contemporary conceptualization of India.¹⁰ The second section traces Satyanand’s biography to highlight that, while he has strong links with India, his life history and aspects of his personality are embedded in New Zealand and the Pacific.¹¹ Thirdly, the chapter explores the question of identity, sparked by public controversy over the Governor-General’s identity and heritage. This debate has raised questions concerning New Zealand’s multiculturalism and relationship with India.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.* See Leckie, *Indian Settlers*.

8 Jacqueline Leckie, “A Long Diaspora: Indian Settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand,” in *India in New Zealand: Local Identities, Global Relations*, ed. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2010), 45–63.

9 See Gautam Ghosh and Jacqueline Leckie, eds., *Asians and the New Multiculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, forthcoming).

10 Leckie, *Indian Settlers*; Paola Voci and Jacqueline Leckie, eds., *Localizing Asia in Aotearoa* (Wellington: Dunmore Publishing, 2011); Jacqueline Leckie, “Indians in the South Pacific: Recentred Diasporas,” in *Recentring Asia: Histories, Encounters, Identities*, ed. Jacob Edmond, Henry Johnson, and Jacqueline Leckie (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 54–84.

11 A short biography is available at “Biography of the Right Honourable Sir Anand Satyanand,” <http://www.gg.govt.nz/the-governor-general/biogg> (accessed 14 January 2011).



Figure 1. Anand Satyanand addressing the Sir Anand Satyanand Lecture, 29 July 2013. This annual lecture was established in 2011 by Indian Newslink. Photographer, Narendra Badekar. Photograph courtesy of Indian Newslink.

Personal Heritage and the South Asian Diaspora

Satyanand's Indian heritage can be traced back to his great-grandparents. His maternal grandfather, Tilakdas, was only aged six when, some time before 1882, he and his father Umrao along with his uncle Chalakdas left Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh to embark on a journey of over one thousand kilometres to Calcutta. Little is known of this major journey and how they were recruited to be among the first *Girmityas* to Fiji. Most likely, like many Indians, Umrao and Chalakdas had been squeezed into near poverty because of the economic impact of colonialism, particularly on rural India. Migration offered a means of ameliorating this situation, and, between 1879 and 1916, 60,965 signed on as indentured labourers or *Girmityas* to Fiji. Recruits underwent medical inspection at ports of embarkation, where emigration passes were completed, including certification from the Surgeons-Superintendent, the Depot Surgeon, the Protector of Emigrants, and the Colonial Emigration Agent.¹² Indian names were often changed when translated into English, and Satyanand's grandfather's surname was recorded as Teluch rather than Tilak.¹³ Like other *Girmityas* to Fiji, he sailed between eleven and

12 For legislation, see Brij V. Lal, ed., *Crossing the Kala Pani: A Documentary History of Indian Indenture in Fiji* (Canberra: Division of Pacific and Asian History, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University; Suva: Fiji Museum, 1998), 49–94.

13 Anand Satyanand, interview by Jacqueline Leckie, 2 March 2011. Satyanand was referring to copies of his grandparents' *Girmit* papers.

eighteen weeks to Fiji, then underwent quarantine and further medical inspections at the Immigration Depot on Nukulau Island. *Girmityas* were then allocated to an employer for five years' indenture. A contract could be renewed for another five years, after which *Girmityas* were entitled to a free return passage to Calcutta. Because *Girmityas* were paid extremely low wages, they often incurred debts and signed on for another contract or pursued other work in Fiji.

Umrao, Chalakdas, and Tilakdas's long voyage from Calcutta to Fiji was on the *Berar*, along with 425 *Girmityas*. Tragically, within weeks of their arrival in Fiji, Umrao died and Chalakdas raised Tilakdas.¹⁴ They worked on a sugar plantation in Navua. In 1897 Tilakdas married Sumintra, the daughter of a *Girmitya* family. The couple settled in the capital, Suva, in the inner city suburb of Toorak and became known as the Tilak family. There were nine children, including Tara (Satyanand's mother) who was born in 1918. Family members operated various commercial ventures, including the White Star Taxi Company and the Century, one of Fiji's first cinema theatres, managed by Tara's eldest brother, K.L. Tilak. Unlike many young Indo-Fijian women of her generation, Tara was well educated and attended Dudley House Methodist School.

In 1903 the recruitment of *Girmityas* to Fiji began from South India. Satyanand's paternal grandparents, Mutyala Sriraman and Kanthamma, originally from Rajamandri (also spelt Rajahmundry) in Andhra Pradesh, sailed from Madras (Chennai) in 1911 on the *Ganges*. Mutyala Sriraman, aged twenty-seven, was recruited to work as a clerk and interpreter (of Telegu and Hindustani) in Fiji's colonial government. His son Mutyala (Satyanand's father) was born in 1913 at a government station, Lawaqa (near Sigatoka) in Nadroga district. The family later moved to Lautoka, where Mutyala Sriraman was a clerk to the Township Board, before relocating to Suva. Mutyala Sriraman was among the few educated Indians of his era in Fiji, was able to translate different Indian languages into English, and was in demand to write letters and advocate for Indo-Fijians.

The different origins of Satyanand's grandparents from North and South India was indicative of the unique Indian diaspora to Fiji, which stemmed from divergent regions, cultures, villages, castes, and religions in South Asia. Approximately 15,000 *Girmityas* originated from South India in contrast to around 45,000 from the northern province of Uttar Pradesh. Despite these heterogeneous roots in South Asia and being further fragmented and dislocated in Fiji, families like those of Anand's grandparents forged a unique Indo-Fijian culture and a distinct language known as Fiji Hindi. It is upon this blending of different diasporic routes to Fiji that Satyanand draws.

When he received the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award in 2011, Satyanand highlighted the differing motivations behind waves of the Indian diaspora: "If escape from poverty was the reason for my grandparents leaving India for Fiji, it was pursuit of education that brought my parents from Fiji to New Zealand."¹⁵ Mutyala Satyanand

14 Much of the information on Satyanand's grandparents and parents is from Satyanand, interview Leckie.

15 Satyanand, "Speech as Chief Guest to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas."

came to New Zealand in 1927 on a Fiji Government scholarship as a student at Wanganui Technical College. In 1931 he enrolled at the University of Otago in Dunedin on a Pacific Island Scholarship to study medicine. He completed his Bachelor of Surgery and Bachelor of Medicine degrees in 1938—the same year that Tara Tilak arrived in Auckland to train at Mt Albert as a Karitane nurse, specializing in the care of mothers and babies.¹⁶ There had been an arrangement in Fiji between her family and Mutyala’s for the couple to be married. So they did, in 1940 in Auckland. They had intended to return to Fiji after Mutyala graduated in 1939.¹⁷ This achievement was prestigious as he was the first Indian to graduate with a medical degree in New Zealand and the first Fiji-born Indian medical graduate. However, the young intern was asked to remain in Auckland hospital’s casualty department after the sudden death of the charge-registrar. Meanwhile the outbreak of World War Two further delayed a return to Fiji. Instead the Satyanands remained in Auckland, and Mutyala Anand Satyanand was born on 22 July 1944 and his brother Vijay, in 1950.

From Ponsonby to Government House

The Satyanand family settled at 201 Ponsonby Road in Auckland, from where Dr Saty (as Dr Satyanand was known) operated his medical practice. As his son told television journalist Amanda Millar, the “family was not dripping with money,” but they were comfortable.¹⁸ The family had a busy schedule, not only because of Mutyala’s medical work, which later included being the honorary medical officer for several sports bodies (rugby league, cricket, tennis, racing, and boxing bodies), but also with the Satyanands’ varied social and community networks. After World War Two, a small but increasing

16 Information about Mutyala and Tara Satyanand is from Satyanand, interview Leckie; Anand Satyanand, interview by Prabha Mishra, May 2010, Radio Brisvaani, DVD in author’s possession; Anand Satyanand, “Mutyala, Satyanand” (obituary), *Journal of the New Zealand Medical Association* 116 (1168) (24 January 2003), <http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/116-1168/318/> (accessed 5 March 2010); notes provided by Tara Satyanand in 2005 to the author.

17 “Degrees Conferred. New Zealand University,” *Evening Post*, 24 June 1939, 11. Mutyala Satyanand was a fellow student and close friend of Ratu Tom Dovi, who was also on a Pacific Island Scholarship. After his graduation he returned to Fiji, where he was still classified as a Native Medical Practitioner, on a lower pay scale than European doctors, despite having an Otago medical degree. Dovi worked as a doctor in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate rather than remain on inferior terms of service in Fiji. It is likely that, if Dr Satyanand had taken up a post at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, he would have been classified as an Indian Medical Practitioner. These divisions within Fiji’s civil service began to change after the formation of the Fiji Public Service Association in 1943. See Jacqueline Leckie, *To Labour with the State: The Fiji Public Service Association* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1997).

18 Amanda Millar, “Satch: The Sir Anand Satyanand Interview,” TV3 News, 60 Minutes, 17 November 2010, <http://www.3news.co.nz/Satch-The-Sir-Anand-Satyanand-interview/tabid/371/articleID/186685/Default.aspx> (accessed 10 February 2011).

number of students from Fiji came to New Zealand,¹⁹ and, as Anand Satyanand recalled, “my parents undertook a kind of vocational guidance role, ... assisting people with what course of study they might consider or where they might stay or which university they might go to as opposed to another.”²⁰ The family had friendships and links with New Zealand Indians, most originally from Gujarat and Punjab, who had begun to settle in Auckland from the early twentieth century.²¹ Anand Satyanand recalled that, as a child during the 1950s, he attended Indian community meetings and weddings, and visits by Indian sports teams at the Māori community centre in Freemans Bay and then at Gandhi Hall when it opened on Victoria Street in 1955.²² The family occasionally watched Hindi movies at the Mayfair Theatre in Sandringham. During these years Dr Satyanand was active in the Auckland Indian Association. He proudly delivered a speech at the 1947 Indian Independence Celebrations in Auckland: “It is a great day for us, because in gaining Dominion status, we feel we have gained our self-respect.”²³ Dr Satyanand was awarded an OBE in 1984 and an Order of Fiji in 1999 for his voluntary activities. He died in 2002.

After World War Two, Tara Satyanand offered English classes for newly arrived women and children.²⁴ She encouraged Indian women to make friends outside the Indian community.²⁵ Tara led through her example of participation in the Catholic Women’s League, presenting talks and cooking demonstrations to women’s groups. From 1958 she took a prominent role in the New Zealand branch of the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women’s Association, serving as President of the Auckland branch, then as National Vice-President and later becoming a life member.²⁶ She was also an advocate of Indian support groups; proactive in establishing Auckland’s Mahila Samaj (the women’s section of the Auckland Indian Association);²⁷ and a foundation member

19 Jacqueline Leckie, “Fijians,” in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand* (Wellington: Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2004), updated 17 March 2005, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/NewZealanders/NewZealandPeoples/Fijians/en.htm> (accessed 10 March 2011).

20 Satyanand, interview Mishra.

21 Leckie, *Indian Settlers*.

22 Satyanand, interview Leckie. He was probably recalling the Indian Wanderers’ tour to New Zealand in 1955. Such visiting hockey teams from India inspired local Indians to develop sports clubs and profiled Indian sports stars to other New Zealanders. Leckie, *Indian Settlers*, 162.

23 “Auckland Indians Celebrate New National Status,” *New Zealand Herald*, 16 August 1947, 10. Photographs of this celebration were published in *New Zealand Free Lance*, 27 August 1947, 29.

24 Catherine Macks, “Privileges of Citizenship are Appreciated,” *Weekly News*, 13 September 1950.

25 On Indian women in New Zealand, see Jacqueline Leckie, “Gumboots and Saris: Engendering Indian Settlers’ History in Aotearoa,” in *Asia in the Making of New Zealand*, ed. Henry Johnson and Brian Moloughney (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006), 79–93.

26 Susan Satyanand, “Lady Susan’s Speech to Open the PPSEWA National Conference, Wellington,” 26 February 2011, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/3624> (accessed 11 March 2011). Susan Satyanand was patron of the association during her husband’s term as Governor-General.

27 See Jacqueline Leckie, “Mahila Samaj,” in *Women Together: A History of Women’s Organisations in New Zealand. Nga Ropu Wahine o te Motu*, ed. A. Else (Wellington: Daphne Brasell and Associates/Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), 536–39.

of the Shanti Niwas Centre, for seniors of Indian and South Asian origin. Satyanand's later career indicated how he was influenced by his parents' commitment to community and voluntary service, while retaining a core sense of an Indian and Pacific heritage. In his first New Year message as Governor-General, he emphasized that the "spirit of volunteerism is the glue that holds our society and economy together."²⁸

Anand Satyanand attended Richmond Road Primary School in Ponsonby, Auckland, between 1950 and 1956, where he was among a small number of non-Pākehā children. This was before substantial numbers of Pacific Islanders settled there. He does not recall being treated any differently because of his Indian background.

We had always been brought up to know and understand we were of Indian origin and to be proud of that. There wasn't ever any question of feeling difficult because we were Indian. I have always been brought up to believe that having a different sort of background is an advantage, not a disadvantage, so no, didn't ever consider it to be a disadvantage.²⁹

Some people did find his exotic surname difficult to pronounce, and, at some stage during his school years, Anand Satyanand acquired the nickname Satch.³⁰ This may have been at his subsequent school, Sacred Heart College in Glen Innes. In 1957 the family relocated to this newly developing suburb in Eastern Auckland—precipitated by Dr Satyanand's ill health and the need for a less frenetic career. Anand's secondary education was therefore at a prominent Catholic boys' school, founded by Marist Brothers in 1903. He later observed that, although prominence has been given to his Asian heritage, there has been little interest in his Catholic upbringing and that he was New Zealand's first Catholic Governor-General.³¹

In 1964, aged nineteen, Satyanand followed in his father's footsteps to study medicine at Otago University but soon realized this was not his calling: "Looking back over that year, I remembered that one of the things I had really enjoyed was the debating and forum meetings involving students."³² This was clearly a portent of his abilities as a lawyer and in public speaking. After returning north he studied law at the University of Auckland while working as a law clerk at the conveyance firm of Greig, Bourke, and Kettelwell.

28 Anand Satyanand, "Governor-General's 2009 New Year Message," 1 January 2009 <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/1463> (accessed 10 February 2011). He is also the patron of VSA (Volunteer Service Abroad). Satyanand, interview Leckie.

29 Satyanand, interview Leckie.

30 *Ibid.*

31 Anand Satyanand, "Speech to Australasian Network of Pastoral Planners Conference Breakfast, Holiday Inn, Wellington," 18 February 2009, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/1552> (accessed 21 January 2011).

32 Graham Weir, "New Governor General, Anand Satyanand, is a Former ADLS Council Member," *Law News* 13 (14 April 2006): 8.

1970 was a pivotal year for Satyanand. He graduated with a Bachelor of Laws Degree from the University of Auckland and was admitted to the Bar.³³ He married legal executive Susan Sharpe, who had been born in Sydney in 1947. Her father was a New Zealander, and the family moved in 1955 to New Zealand. When Millar asked about the couple's courtship, Lady Susan, with a twinkle in her eye, calmly reflected that Anand was "very striking" and that "everyone seemed to like him," he was "very popular" and "very intriguing."³⁴ Over subsequent decades the couple's close personal bond merged also into a working relationship that would prove to be a key part of Satyanand's popular appeal as Governor-General.

Meanwhile Satyanand honed his experience as a lawyer at the Crown Solicitor's Office in Auckland and in 1976 became a partner in the Auckland law firm Shieff Angland, where until 1982 he specialized in criminal law, revenue law, and judicial review cases. He also was elected as a member of the Auckland District Law Society Council and served as a member of the Government Criminal Law Reform Committee and the District Court Rules Committee.

In 1972 Anand and Susan took the first of many trips to India. Initially, this visit was part of their OE, a pattern followed by many young New Zealanders during these years. During the 1970s OE or "overseas experience" could entail many different routes, but, like many Kiwis, Anand and Susan spent time in India. Similar to many tourists, they were

dismayed at the obvious poverty of people, beyond any of our imagination from New Zealand, and alarmed at the disparity between the very rich and the very poor. But over the years that feeling, whilst not having gone away, has been replaced by admiration at seeing the country improve its quality of life for people generally.³⁵

The Satyanands made another major trip to India in 1995 with their three children, Tara (born in 1975), Anya (born 1978), and Rohan (born 1980). Anand Satyanand subsequently made significant official visits to India, including as a delegate to the 2003 Pravasi Bharatiya conference; accompanying New Zealand's Prime Minister, Helen Clark, in 2004; and in September 2008 undertaking the first state visit there by a Governor-General.

Anand and Susan's first child, Tara, was born in 1975—the same year they supported David Lange as a Labour candidate in the parliamentary election. By then the Satyanands lived in Freemans Bay in Auckland and were neighbours of Lange and his wife Naomi. Although Satyanand and Lange now occasionally found themselves as adversaries in court, Lange later quipped that Susan and Anand were part of his "long

33 In 2006, the University of Auckland awarded Satyanand an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

34 Millar, "Satch."

35 Satyanand, interview Leckie.

march people.”³⁶ Although Lange’s initial bid to enter parliament failed, two years later he was elected into parliament in the Mangere by-election and in 1984 led the New Zealand Labour Party to form a government. The friendship between Satyanand and Lange stems from being law students at Auckland University and working at the Westfield freezing works in Otahuhu. India formed another link between the two. Lange worked in the same law practice as Thakorbhai Parbhu, and the two formed a close friendship. This, and the encouragement of other New Zealand Indians, initiated Lange’s initial visit to India in 1967.³⁷ Lange’s official visit to India as Prime Minister in 1984 marked a shift towards closer ties between New Zealand and India with the reopening of the New Zealand High Commission in New Delhi. It had been closed by former New Zealand Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon. Sir Edmund Hillary was appointed as the High Commissioner.³⁸

The year 1982 was another watershed when, aged thirty-eight, Satyanand was appointed as a Judge in the District Court with a jury trial warrant. He was the nation’s second judge of Indian origin, after Avinash Deobhakta. He was initially appointed to the Palmerston North District Court. John Harvey, former editor of the *Manawatu Evening Standard*, was impressed by the judge’s initiatives to be informed of local issues: “He had come into the community as a stranger, but he was determined to become acquainted with it. He was very well respected as a judge.”³⁹ By 1994 Judge Satyanand presided in courts in the Auckland area, where he was also involved in the development of judicial orientation and professional education programmes, while also serving as chairman of the Napier District Prison Board and on the National Parole Board. This expertise may have been a compelling reason why he was invited to be a Parliamentary Ombudsman in 1995. He accepted, drawing inspiration from Sir Guy Powles, New Zealand’s first ombudsman (1962–77), who was also a lawyer and diplomat, serving as New Zealand’s High Commissioner to India between 1960 and 1962. To Satyanand, Powles “was a wonderful guy and I admired him, so when the opportunity came to be an ombudsman I felt that this was a really good thing, a new set of professional windows.”⁴⁰ Ombudsman Satyanand considered many complaints of maladministration by central and local government agencies and about the availability of official information.⁴¹ At the end of his two five-year terms, Satyanand was asked to chair the Confidential Forum for Former In-Patients of Psychiatric Hospitals and to institute New Zealand’s first register of pecuniary interests of members of parliament.

36 *Ibid.* This refers to those who supported Lange’s political career and the Labour Party.

37 David Lange, *My Life* (Auckland, New Zealand: Viking (Penguin), 2005), 68, 73–77.

38 *Ibid.*, 190–91. Lange was honoured with Life Membership of the New Zealand Indian Central Association in 2005. Leckie, *Indian Settlers*, 173.

39 Elizabeth Clifford Marsh, “Governor-General ‘Gracious Man,’” *Otago Daily Times*, 23 August 2006, 26.

40 Satyanand, interview Mishra.

41 Anand Satyanand, “The Ombudsman Concept and Human Rights Protection,” *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 21 (1999): 19–26. This article was originally a paper presented to the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs Seminar, April 1998.

On 18 February 2006 Satyanand was invited to a pivotal meeting with Helen Clark, New Zealand's Prime Minister. She asked him to consider appointment as Governor-General, following Dame Silvia Cartwright's end of term later in 2006. Satyanand accepted and later reflected,

I think my appointment as Governor-General speaks well of our country, that our country is one that will give people a go, no matter what their background may have been. It obviously speaks well of the way in which New Zealand life has enabled someone of a migrant community, if you like, to be accepted into a general community and a professional community, in order to practise law and be a judge.⁴²

Craig Ewington, a former law partner at Shieff Angland, was not surprised who the new Governor-General was: "Satch has been able to cover all cultures and all kinds of people."⁴³

This observation speaks to the value Satyanand placed upon diversity—also one of the three "planks" Satyanand stood on while Governor-General.⁴⁴ The other two planks were community engagement and civics. Satyanand proudly showed his commitment to diversity through beginning most of his official speeches with greetings from the languages of the realm of New Zealand: English, Māori, Cook Island Māori, Niuean, Tokelauan, and New Zealand Sign Language. The Governor-General again stood on the plank of diversity when he concluded his speech at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2011 by speaking in Māori as well as quoting Mahatma Gandhi: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."⁴⁵ Satyanand's 2008 Waitangi Day address at Government House in Auckland reiterated that his predecessor Governor Hobson affirmed religious tolerance at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.⁴⁶

Drawing on the wisdom from different cultures and leaders relates to Satyanand's second "plank": the importance of engaging in the community. This commitment was already evident in his earlier career as a Judge and among the reasons for his being chosen as an Ombudsman and later as Governor-General. Satyanand has received many accolades for his community engagement and service, including being awarded

42 Satyanand, interview Mishra.

43 Clifford Marsh, "Governor-General 'Gracious Man,'" 26.

44 Anthony Hubbard, "At Her Majesty's Service," *Sunday Star Times*, 3 October 2010, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-star-times/features/4189179/At-Her-Majestys-service> (accessed 13 February 2011).

45 Satyanand, "Speech as Chief Guest to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas."

46 Anand Satyanand, "Waitangi Day Address, Government House Auckland," 6 February 2008, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/809> (accessed 11 March 2011).

the New Zealand Commemoration Medal in 1990 and being made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for public services in 2005 then a Principal Companion in 2006. In his first address as Governor-General on Waitangi Day in 2007 at Government House in Wellington, he urged New Zealanders to have a national conversation about the possibilities open to the country as a Pacific nation, especially as they could share the knowledge and wisdom of New Zealand's many communities.⁴⁷ Satyanand has not just spoken eloquent words about engagement in nation building and between different communities, but he has been a pivotal figure in several public expressions of bridge building. One example was his visit to Hukanui as a guest of Ngāti Wairere where the kaupapa involved a welcome to many from the Waikato Indian community. This milestone in formal engagement between Māori and local Indians was marked by the Governor-General's flag being raised beside the Kīngitanga flag and with the presentation of taonga from the marae to Sir Anand and Lady Susan.⁴⁸ The late Kaumātua Hare Puke signalled this event as bringing together two cultures and the beginning of new friendships.⁴⁹

Civics is the third “plank” that Satyanand has emphasized as Governor-General. He has passionately advocated New Zealanders to be “engaged in New Zealand's democracy,” stressing that voting in a General Election is “the ultimate form of civic involvement... a demonstration of the strength of our democracy and the civil liberties we all hold dear.”⁵⁰ He has held up Māori success in bringing claims before the courts and the Waitangi Tribunal as a case of civics in action: “Sensible minds using civic processes in an intelligent way to achieve. It's a journey that's been really worth engaging in.”

Fractured Identities and Belonging

However fractured or frayed, ossified or fluid, there is a sense of cultural, religious, and historic ties with India in various combinations of longing and nostalgia.⁵¹

This observation is by historian Brij Lal, who like Satyanand is the grandson of *Girmityas* in Fiji. But Lal was raised in Fiji and Satyanand, in New Zealand. Although

47 Anand Satyanand, “Hon Anand Satyanand Governor-General of New Zealand Waitangi Day Address 2007 Government House Wellington,” 6 February 2007, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/645> (accessed 10 February 2011).

48 The Māori King Movement or Kīngitanga arose among some Māori tribes during the 1850s to establish a symbolic role similar in status to that of the British monarch.

49 “Governor General Visits Hukanui Marae,” *Te Hookioi* 26 (July 2008): 15, http://www.tainui.co.nz/te_hookioi_pdfs/Issue26.pdf (accessed 11 March 2011).

50 Satyanand, “Governor-General's 2009 New Year Message.”

51 Brij V. Lal, introduction to *The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora*, ed. Brij Lal (Singapore: Éditions Didier Millet/National University of Singapore, 2006), 14.

Satyanand was part of a tiny Auckland Indian community from the 1950s to the 1970s and had a strong sense of his Indian heritage, his environment and upbringing was very different to that of Indo-Fijians, who during the same period comprised the majority of Fiji's population. Despite this, Satyanand's appointment as Governor-General has placed a huge responsibility upon him to "speak" for Asians, especially Indians. The Governor-General cannot advocate for any one community, and Satyanand has always emphasized his Kiwi identity. As he told me,

I've felt deeply that the Governor-General has to reflect the community, and reflect the community to itself if you like and therefore speak not as a member of any particular group. So, no, I haven't felt any particular need to advocate the cause of India or Indian things, but I have never looked aside from or felt any need to suppress the fact that I am clearly of Indian origin.⁵²

While acknowledging his Indian heritage, Satyanand has also interrogated his own identity with India. He explained to sports journalist Joseph Romanos:

With India the connection is more remote. It was the place of my grandparents and is part of my makeup. I don't have relatives I know of in India, but I have always been warmly received there, and I feel a special link with the country.⁵³

Satyanand expanded on his sense of identity in his speech at the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in 2011, emphasizing how diaspora both connects and estranges ancestral cultural and kin connections. He reiterated the historic connections between India and New Zealand:

my family lost contact with relatives in India, I still retain with pride the *Girmitiya* shipping papers of my grandparents and the link they represent with my Indian heritage. For many New Zealanders of Indian origin, the bond, to use novelist Amitav Ghosh's words, is an "*epic relationship*" that is symbolic of a strong emotional attachment. For me the image that represents that epic relationship—from a New Zealand perspective—can be seen on the cover of *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian Diaspora*, edited by Professor Brij Lal.⁵⁴ On the cover of this fascinating and scholarly book is a

52 Satyanand, interview Leckie.

53 Joseph Romanos, "The Wellingtonian Interview: Sir Anand Satyanand an Outstanding Governor-General," *Wellingtonian*, 22 December 2010, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/local-papers/the-wellingtonian/4466059/The-Wellingtonian-Interview-Sir-Anand-Satyanand#comments> (accessed 22 January 2011).

54 Brij V. Lal, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora* (Singapore: Éditions Didier Millet/National University of Singapore, 2006). This work contains a summary of Indians in New Zealand by Jacqueline Leckie, "Indians in New Zealand," 389–95.

photograph from the opening in 1953 of the Nehru Hall, New Zealand's first Indian community centre. Above the entrance to the hall, where members of the New Zealand Indian Central Association are proudly standing, is a graphic representation of their emblem—the flags of New Zealand and India crossed and bound together.⁵⁵

In contrast to the public image of the Governor-General as a “master of small talk,” “jovial, bland and careful,”⁵⁶ as Chief Guest at the 2011 Divas, he revealed his intellectual depth through an eloquent call to recognize the human side of globalization. Part of his speech is reproduced here at length because it reflects Satyanand's reading of global issues and his personal reflection of this through the Indian diaspora. This speech could be interpreted as a subtle critique of the one-sided emphasis given to the economic prominence and financial investment of the contemporary Indian diaspora. This emphasis has overlooked, not only the toil of *Girmityas* and Indian workers in New Zealand's history, but also the social and cultural connections and contributions to the countries that Indian migrants settled in.

Globalization is often depicted as access to markets for foreign products, international investment and the flow of goods and services. I believe that such a one-sided perspective, that sees global connections in just monetary and economic terms, is almost certainly bound to fail. To me the two intertwined flags on the Nehru Hall signal that globalization is also about connections between people, communities and cultures. Two quotes in this regard particularly resonate. First, Nobel Prize winner, Professor Amartya Sen, who noted that: “... we have to recognise that our global civilisation is a world heritage—not just a collection of disparate local cultures.” Secondly, New York University Professor, Arjun Appadurai, who wrote: “the new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping disjunctive order which cannot any longer be understood in simple models of push and pull or of surpluses and deficits.”

It is connections between people that allow trade and other relationships to prosper, and not the other way around. In New Zealand, for example, the Indian community, assisted by a catalyst organisation, the Asia New Zealand Foundation,⁵⁷ has built a strong tradition of Diwali festivals which are celebrated as public events and are attended by New Zealanders of many races and creeds. The goodwill that is generated by these events flows into many other spheres of life.

55 Satyanand, “Speech as Chief Guest to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.”

56 Millar, “Satch”; Hubbard, “At Her Majesty's Service.”

57 Satyanand has been Deputy Chairman of the Asia New Zealand Foundation, and since 2006 he has been the Patron.

For globalization to succeed, and to benefit all, we must recognise that it is more than trade and investment—it includes people, knowledge, technology and communication. My own Fiji-born Indian parents were part of this stream, having travelled to New Zealand to further their education and gain skills that were not available at home.⁵⁸

Satyanand also directly interrogated the issue of identity in New Zealand. He asked:

“well, who are we then?” The question of our essential identity is one we are still posing of ourselves. In other words, as it has been put “kiwi culture is work in progress”. It may be many more years before we have a definitive answer. Perhaps we do not even need one. Suffice to say that in 2007, we are a blend of many people. We are a rich tapestry of culture whose threads are interwoven, but distinct nonetheless.⁵⁹

Satyanand’s perception of this “rich tapestry” was brought to the fore when his nationality and identity as a Kiwi was thrown into local and international prominence on 4 October 2010. Paul Henry, an anchor on NZ breakfast television, asked John Key, New Zealand’s Prime Minister, whether the Governor-General was “even a New Zealander” and “Are you going to choose a New Zealander who looks and sounds like a New Zealander this time ... are we going to go for someone who is more like a New Zealander this time?” While this interview was broadcast, the Governor-General was attending the Commonwealth Games in India. Satyanand found this “a somewhat surreal experience, hearing about it and reading about it while over there.”⁶⁰ TVNZ initially defended Henry’s willingness “to say the things we quietly think but are scared to say out loud.”⁶¹ When Satyanand was asked by New Zealand media in New Delhi about his reaction to Paul Henry “saying you are not a New Zealander,” he replied, “I’m reliably informed that I was born at Bethany hospital, 37 Dryden Street, Grey Lynn in Auckland.”⁶² The Governor-General did not consider it necessary to add any further comments, but around 1,600 complaints were made to Television New Zealand. Henry was suspended for two weeks from TVNZ at the end of which he resigned from his employment. He also apologized to Satyanand.

58 Satyanand, “Speech as Chief Guest to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.”

59 Anand Satyanand, “The Honourable Anand Satyanand Governor-General of New Zealand Race Relations Day 2007 Wellington,” 21 March 2007, <http://www.gg.govt.nz/node/614> (accessed 13 February 2011).

60 Romanos, “Wellingtonian Interview.”

61 Martin Kay, “Henry Apology for G-G Race Comments,” Stuff, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv/4194441/Henry-apology-for-G-G-race-comments> (accessed 12 February 2011).

62 Satyanand, interview Leckie.

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