

WORKSHEET 7

HOME STUDY PACKAGE

Week 7: 16th-20th August

Due date: 6th September (8am-2pm)

Ref: Unit 4 Voting System

This worksheet 7 is entirely based on the notes of unit 4 voting system.

Activity 4.1

The following extract is from the Journal of Pacific. Read and answer the questions in the Activity that follow:

The Fiji General Election of 1972

Fijians had voted for members of parliament to represent their electorate in 1966 and 1968, but the 1972 General Election was the first after the British left Fiji. The major issues in the earlier elections had been the proposal for a common roll (instead of communal voting), the fate of the sugar industry (especially after the 1960 sugar strike) and whether independence should come immediately or much later. These were no longer issues after 1970. The 1972 election was a contest between two different views of who should lead Fiji into the future.

In 1972, some seats were regarded as “safe” (easily won by a particular party) but others were seen as risky and could go either way – to the Alliance party, or the National Federation Party (FNP). To win support among iTaukei voters, the NFP had joined forces with the smaller National Democratic Party, hoping to win more iTaukei votes in the coming election.

Although Fijians had voted before in elections, by-elections, and council and local-government elections, Fiji was still learning how to conduct elections as a newly independent nation. There was considerable borrowing from overseas.

- The NFP was modelled on the famous National Congress Party of India, which had led the struggle for independence from the British (in 1949)
- The Alliance was modelled on the Malaysia Alliance Party (Parti Perikatan) which

had won independence from the British in 1957.

- The Fijian Association (formed in 1956) to protect iTaukei rights, had a Australian advisor as Party secretary.
- The British Labour Party provided a campaign advisor for the Alliance and he reorganized the structure of the Alliance Party.
- An American was brought to Fiji to set up the Alliance's Nation-Tovata newspaper.

The 1972 election was contested by the NFP, the Alliance, the Fijian Independent Party, and 26 independent candidates. The key issue was really a contest between the style of the two leaders – Ratu Kamisese Mara of the Alliance and Mr Sid Koya of the NFP. The Alliance concentrated on village-level meetings, and the NFP on big rallies and public meetings. 124 candidates contested the 52 seats.

Everyone had four votes, but voting was not compulsory, and voters did not have to use all their four votes. The results were a clear victory for the Alliance.

Number of seats won 1972 Election (52 seats contested)				
Communal Seats	Alliance	FNP	FIP	Independents
Fijian voters	12	0	0	0
Indian voters	0	12	0	0
General elector	3	0	0	0
National Seats				
Fijian voters	7	3	0	0
Indian voters	7	3	0	0
General Electors	4	1	0	0
TOTAL	33	19	0	0

A year after the election, Dr Ahmed Ali concluded that “the 1972 General Election confirms the past pattern of political behaviour”. (Ali, Journal of Pacific History, 1973, p.180) Communal loyalty was strong and each community remembered the struggles over the 1960 sugar strike and the bitter debates in the 1960s over a proposed common roll of voters. The Alliance continued to support the policies of the former British rulers and its supporters dominated the Great Council of Chiefs. Dr Ali concluded that this situation was unlikely to change.

(Note: He was proven wrong three years later when the NFP unexpectedly won the 1977 General Election. In 1987, following the NFP victory in the elections, a military coup unexpectedly removed the elected government.)

1. What were the three big issues in the elections prior to independence?

2. What was the key issue in the 1972 election?

3. Opinion: In your own words explain why Fiji had to borrow ideas for the election from overseas?

Ref: HOW THE FIJI ISLANDS ELECTORAL SYSTEM WORKS

Activity 4.2

1. Who appoints the Chairman of the Electoral Commission?

2. State the role of the Electoral Commission.

3. Name the voting system that was used in Fiji in 2006

Activity 4.3

1. List five (5) of the activities that political parties commence once an election is called.

2. What is “faction”?

3. Explain the meaning of “factional squabbles”.
