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TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

# Media Release

(For Immediate Release)

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## **Students highlight need for good leaders through Essay Competition.**

“I will definitely vote in next year’s elections because only then will it be our government.” Those are the sentiments of 18 year old Sidharth Kumar of Xavier College, Ba who won first prize in the Senior Category of the Citizens’ Constitutional Forum’s National Essay Competition.

While receiving the prize money of \$200 from CCF Programme Manager Rodney Yee at the School Assembly on Monday July 15<sup>th</sup>, Sidharth said he has been encouraged by his teachers to enter such competitions to enhance his writing skills and research issues to stay in touch national events.

In his winning essay titled “One Vote can Turn the tables,” Sidharth states that “it becomes indispensable for the entire nation to come together and choose quality leaders who can steer this island nation which is almost a dot on the world map to pathway of innumerable prosperity. Thus, this essay will put light on how people can effectively choose good leaders and make their sheer contribution felt in the democratic election process.”

15 year old Shayel Raj of Swami Vivekananda College in Nadi did her school proud by taking out the first prize in the Junior category. Shayel says she was inspired by her Social Science Teacher to take part in the CCF Essay Competition.

She says it was only while she was working on the essay and reading up on the events unfolding in Fiji that she realized that Fiji needs a democratically elected government, one chosen by the people. “I have come to realize that it is every citizens’ right to take part in elections and in government activities as they are responsible to the people,” stated Shayel.



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Fiji National University Student Adi Veniana Nalu Lumuni won the first prize of \$200 in the Open category. 20 year old Veniana says she decided to enter the competition for the first time as the topic was very important to Fiji and its people, with a new constitution and elections approaching.

“I turned to the scriptures as a source of inspiration while writing the essay as it is the platform for everyone to turn to when looking for leadership qualities. It is my hope that people will learn to choose leaders who help and understand every one, someone who do not only think of themselves but all races and religions in Fiji,” said Veniana.

Veniana says she intends to ensure to enter the competition next year and that her winning essay would inspire her friends and relatives to also take part and be involved in national issues.

This was the fourth year for the CCF Essay Competition which received 152 entries from around the country. In the last four years the competition has attracted about 400 plus entrants to the essay competition.

This year’s overall theme was “Responsible and Active Citizenship” and for the first time there were three categories the Open, Senior and Junior and entrants were required to express themselves on *“The Importance of Participation in a Democratic Election process to Choose Good Leaders.”*

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