

Da tu vata ga, vuvu na wai—Rethinking Food Security and Sustainability in iTaukei Coastal Communities

Kolaia Raisele (University of the South Pacific, Fiji)

iTaukei intangible cultural heritage has contributed to sustainable lives in the past and has continued to sustain lives of iTaukei people at present. The concept of sustainable development is not new to iTaukei coastal communities as their cultural and social practices towards environment sustainability, inclusive social development, economic development, and peace and security have proven otherwise. iTaukei coastal communities are quite familiar in addressing the needs of the present and future generations, the needs of the *vanua*¹ as a whole, and ensuring sustainable lives for each member of the community. It ensures balances between nature and communities, economic and social stability. Sustainability can be associated with the iTaukei concept of *sautu*². *Sautu* in the iTaukei context can mean peace, wellbeing, prosperity, and fertility of fishing grounds. Therefore, different sociocultural practices ensure a sustainable food system in iTaukei coastal communities.

It is in this view that iTaukei coastal communities' approaches to food production and consumption are designed to attain and promote *sautu* (sustainability). Most of these practices are slowly fading away due to external forces of change that have stripped the balance that has sustained iTaukei lives in the past. More specifically, modern ideologies of change driven by a neo-liberal mindset in the ever-increasing globalizing world have shifted the iTaukei values and beliefs rooted in 'we' to 'I' (communal to individual). In other words, the shift from a subsistence economy to a market economy, which significantly impacted the iTaukei coastal communities' food systems. Now that the very change of global interconnectedness has brought about ecological, economic, environmental, and social challenges, it is about time that iTaukei coastal communities (and individuals themselves) look into their own cultural heritage of food production, security, and consumption so that traditional food sustainability approaches are revived and maintained.

With this in mind, it would be an honor for me to present some iTaukei intangible cultural heritage that ensure food security and sustainability in iTaukei coastal communities. Specifically, in addition to different food preparation and preservation methods, the following ICH elements are presented:

- i. *solesolevaki*
- ii. *tabu ni qoliqoli*
- iii. *qoli veinanumi*
- iv. *vulavakaviti*

¹ Constitute of iTaukei people, their land, their fishing grounds, their spirituality, their history, their traditions, culture, and epistemology.

² A state of wellbeing where there is peace and prosperity between humans, with each other and their natural environment.

The findings of this presentation are based on fieldwork for a master's thesis in 2019 and three years (2016–2018) of conducting cultural mapping in iTaukei communities.